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David Lynch

David Lynch studied painting at the Boston Museum School and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA).

Lynch's five-decade career includes an extensive body of painting, drawing, photography, printmaking, installation, music, and film. While studying at PAFA in the late 1960s, Lynch had a vision to make his first 'moving painting'; a sculptural painting beneath a moving projection titled *Six Men Getting Sick (Six Times)*, 1967. This multimedia work marked Lynch's first foray into video and filmmaking. Since this time his prolific body of work has touched on subjects of the organic body and industrial sites in various states of decay; describing a deeper human experience both beyond and within the everyday. Often depicting these scenes with a language of surrealism and mystery, Lynch's work balances at the porous divide between the body and the world it inhabits.

Lynch has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including, most recently, a survey at HOME, Manchester (2019), and retrospectives at Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht (2018-19), the Centre of Contemporary Art, Torun, Poland (2017-18), and the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane, Australia (2015). A major survey exhibition was presented at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (2014-15) where he studied art. Previously, Brett Littman curated a thematic selection of works addressing Lynch's use of naming through narrative text that originated at Kayne Griffin Corcoran in Los Angeles (2013-14) and traveled to the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (2014-15). Also in the United Kingdom, his photographs of industrial scenes were surveyed in "David Lynch: The Factory Photographs" at the Photographers' Gallery, London (2014). Earlier important solo exhibitions include the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain in Paris (2007), the GL Strand in Copenhagen (2010-11), and the Garage Center for Contemporary Culture in Moscow (2009), among other international institutions.

Born in Missoula, Montana David Lynch now lives and works in Los Angeles. Lynch is also known as a filmmaker and recording artist who over the past three decades has written and directed critically acclaimed films such as *Eraserhead*, *Elephant Man*, *Blue Velvet*, *Lost Highway*, *Mulholland Drive*, *Inland Empire* and the television series *Twin Peaks*. He is also represented by Kayne Griffin Corcoran in Los Angeles.

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David Lynch
Selected Press

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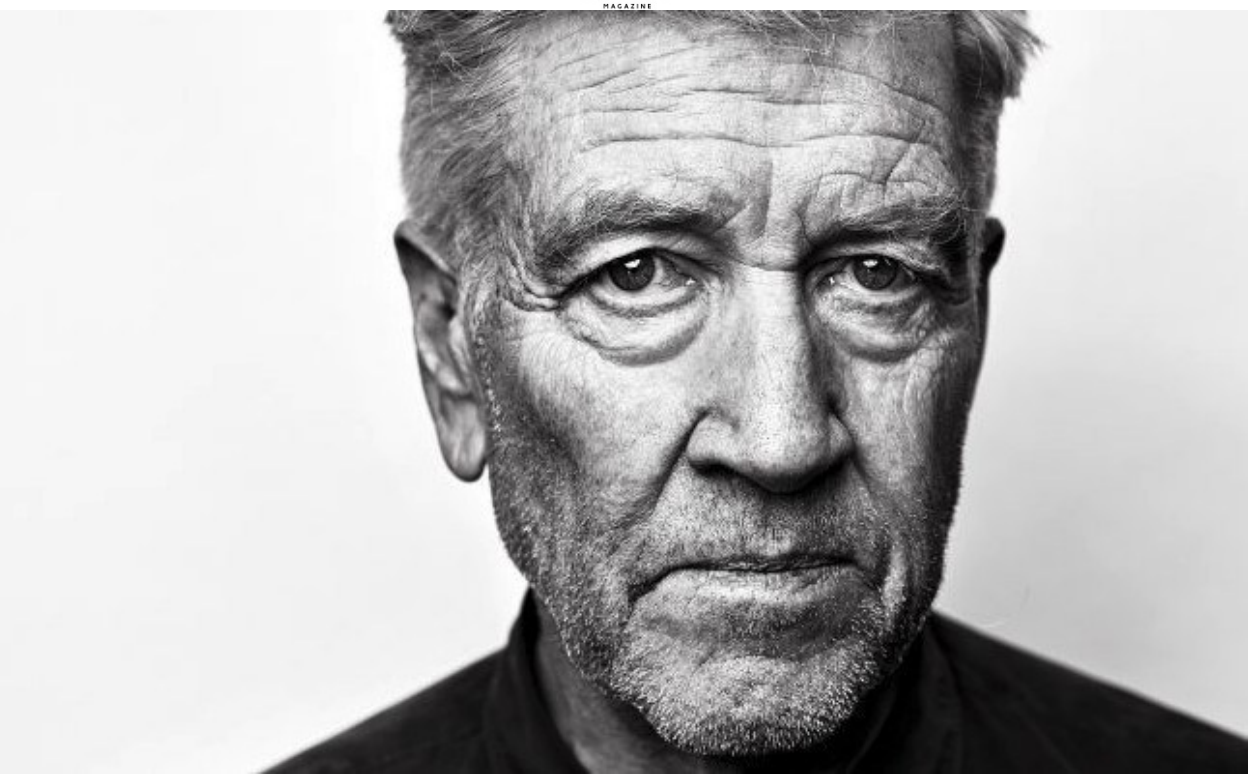
"The mysterious world of David Lynch's photographs of old factories." *faroutmagazine.co.uk (Far Out)*, 9 June 2019.

FAR OUT
MAGAZINE



David Lynch has made no secret of his infatuation with the industrial revolution throughout his career, a theme that has followed him around in multiple different artistic creations.

Take, for example, *Eraserhead,* Lynch's breakout project which is filmed in black and white and tells the story of Henry Spencer who is left to care for his grossly deformed child in a desolate industrial landscape. While creating *Twin Peaks,* Lynch took on a side project with the Brooklyn Academy of Music after they approached him and composer Angelo Badalamenti to create a theatrical piece of work. The result saw Lynch coin the phrase "*Industrial Symphonies*" while completing his 1990 avant-garde musical play *Industrial Symphony No. 1: The Dream of the Broken Hearted*.

The factories of his film *The Elephant Man,* the sawmill in *Twin Peaks* and the lawn mower in *The Straight Story* all relate back to the industrial revolution theme that Lynch has carried along with him throughout his creative journey. Making this topic more literal, Lynch made more of his interest in photography and travelled to northern England to take photos of the degrading industrial landscape.

"Well…if you said to me, 'Okay, we're either going down to Disneyland or we're going to see this abandoned factory,' there would be no choice," Lynch once in an interview. "I'd be down there at the factory. I don't really know why. It just seems like such a great place to set a story."

With more expansive trips to factories in Berlin, Poland and New York to follow, Lynch build up an archive of images which would later be collected into his book *David Lynch: The Factory Photographs*, a hardback edited by Petra Giloy-Hirtz. "Anyone familiar with David Lynch's cinematic achievement will identify similarities between this series of photographs and his most powerful films," Giloy-Hirtz writes in the books' description. "Dark and beautiful, mystical and enigmatic, these photos reveal Lynch's unique style. "The exterior and interior, black and white shots of factories in Berlin, Poland, New York, England, and other locations are filled with Lynchian characteristics: labyrinthine passages, decaying walls, industrial waste, and detritus. Devoid of nature, the dying, manmade structures are actually being overtaken by nature's innate power. They are haunting cathedrals of a bygone industrial era – the perfect setting for a David Lynch film, and a revealing addition to his unique and fascinating oeuvre."

Speaking about his love for factories and the landscape as a whole, Lynch once said: "It's an incredible mood," in an interview with *Dazed Magazine*. "I feel like I'm in a place that's just magical, where nature is reclaiming these derelict factories. It's very dreamy. Every place you turn, there's something so sensational and surprising – it's the Beatles' *Magical Mystery Tour*. All the cities are looking more and more the same. The real treasures are going away; the mood they create is going away."

Below, enjoy a glimpse inside the world of Lynch's old factories.

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Siegal, Nina. "David Lynch's Art Peer Behind the Facade." *www.nytimes.com (The New York Times)*, 14 March 2019.

The New York Times

"Boy Lights Fire," 2010, is part of the Bonnefanten Museum's David Lynch retrospective. Credit David Lynch, via Collection Bonnefantenmuseum

MAASTRICHT, the Netherlands — Exploring the Bonnefanten Museum's David Lynch retrospective here, "Someone Is in My House," one starts to conjure an image of Mr. Lynch's hands: They must never stop moving.

The American filmmaker known for macabre, enigmatic films such as "Eraserhead," "Blue Velvet" and "Mulholland Drive," as well as his recently revived hit 1990s supernatural crime TV series "Twin Peaks," seems to have a manic creative drive that has compelled him to explore every conceivable form of art: paintings, lithographs, black-and-white photographs, drawings, comics, collage, sculptures, stop-motion animation and even anthropomorphic design lamps.

"Yeah, I love to work," Mr. Lynch said in a telephone interview from Los Angeles, where he lives and has his studio. "Every medium is so beautiful but each in their particular way, and you learn about them by getting in there and working with them and talking with them."

More than 500 of Mr. Lynch's artworks are on display in the sprawling exhibition, which runs until April 28 and coincides with the Tefaf Maastricht art fair. A smaller version of the show will travel to HOME, a cultural center in Manchester, England, where it opens July 6.

Painting was a first love for Mr. Lynch, who studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. "First of all, I only wanted to ever be a painter, but painting led into filmmaking," he said. "So I feel like I'm a painter and a filmmaker and I'm also into music. I always say, I go where the ideas take me, and that's sort of how it is."

Mr. Lynch at work in his studio in Los Angeles, where he lives. He studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Credit David Lynch

He has been showing his work for several decades, with solo shows at the Leo Castelli Gallery in New York and at galleries in France, Spain and Japan; in 2007, the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain in Paris hosted "David Lynch: The Air Is on Fire," which Mr. Lynch said "opened up a bunch of doors."

"The exhibition at the Bonnefanten Museum is a tour de force in extending the visibility of Lynch's fine art practice," said Bill Griffin, a co-founder of the Kayne Griffin Corcoran gallery in Los Angeles, which has represented Mr. Lynch since 2011.

The works range from tiny — a series of drawings inside matchbook covers — to monumental, and from childhood sketches to mature paintings, so it functions, in a way, as a glimpse inside Mr. Lynch's mind.

It is tempting to read almost everything in the exhibition as either a precursor to, or an outgrowth of, his moody, violent and graphic film and television work. A student graphite drawing on paper seems to be a

"Billy Sings the Tune for the Death Row Shuffle," 2018, a mixed media work, is one of more than 500 of Mr. Lynch's pieces in the exhibition. Credit David Lynch

sketch for the main character of "Eraserhead;" the large mixed media on canvas work, "Bob Loves Sally Until She Is Blue in the Face," could be a reference to Bob, a character in "Twin Peaks."

"Sometimes they kind of cross-pollinate, but mostly they're their own thing," Mr. Lynch said. "I don't think I can give you an example of a painting that led to a film or a film idea, but in a way it has happened.

"There are some rules in painting that apply kind of obviously to filmmaking, like color and composition and stuff like that. But all these things, they're their own thing, really."

The works on display are organized semi-chronologically, with the earliest a childhood painting of a house, with trees and insects, from 1952, when Mr. Lynch was 6 years old. The painting is in part the inspiration for the exhibition's title, said Stijn Huijts, the museum's director and curator of the exhibition.

"Already as a kid he would ask himself, with these beautiful houses, what's going on behind the facades?" Mr. Huijts said. "That's really very Lynchian because he has a fascination with things that are under the surface, the fourth dimension, things we don't know, the subconscious."

One photograph, a print from 2013, seems to sum up Mr. Lynch's imagination: "Head #11," an outline of a head filled with storm clouds and lightning. There's a lot of disgorging going on in these artworks; human forms are distorted into suggestive shapes; much of the imagery involves sexual violence or arson. It's easy to notice references to the twisted bodies of Francis Bacon, an early influence, and the art brut aesthetics of Jean Dubuffet.

Mr. Griffin said that the artist's primary influences were, indeed, "Bacon from a visual and theatrical point of view, but conceptually more in line with Ernst, Duchamp, Man Ray," some of the pioneers of Dada and Surrealism.

Given the darkness of his imagination, one wonders about its origins. Mr. Lynch lived in several states while growing up and said that he had "a wonderful, happy childhood, incredible." It was when Mr. Lynch lived in Philadelphia, while an art student, that he discovered what he calls "the contrast" that fed the darker side of his imagination, he said. "I always say that the city of Philadelphia was my biggest influence."

"There was this black patina over almost everything like coal dust," he added. "There was fear in the air, there was corruption, there was violence, there was insanity in Philadelphia. The rooms in the buildings were painted with a certain kind of green, with this dark wood and staircase railings, bricks and big casement windows, narrow streets, and this thick atmosphere of negativity."

His student artworks displayed in the first rooms of the exhibition express the sense of gloom, including his first "moving picture," made in 1967, "Six Men Getting Sick (Six Times)," a 16-millimeter experimental

short film projected onto a sculptural panel of six disembodied heads vomiting repeatedly, now a digital projection.

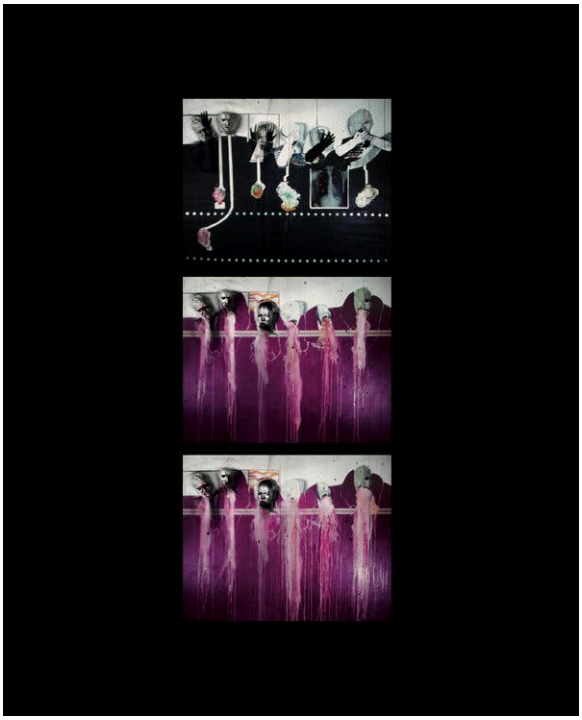
In the final room, monumental multimedia paintings are presented in large gilded frames behind glass incorporate materials like cardboard, fabric and knives.

The Bonnefanten has recently acquired his "Boy Lights Fire," from 2010, an image of a bald boy in white underwear with uncannily long arms, striking a match against a matchbook. The sparks are orange light bulbs.

Mr. Lynch is now 73, and he's still making TV programs and films, and still creating work in the studio.

His work "never stops," Mr. Huijts said. "He has to create constantly."

Mr. Lynch said that painting had been a little difficult in early March, "because I paint outdoors and it's been really cold in Los Angeles lately." But still, "I am working on two small paintings, and I'm building a lamp and I'm trying to catch ideas."



"Six Men Getting Sick," 1967. "I feel like I'm a painter and a filmmaker and I'm also into music. I always say, I go where the ideas take me, and that's sort of how it is," Mr. Lynch said. Credit via Absurda

A version of this article appears in print on March 14, 2019 in The New York Times International Edition.

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"A Major David Lynch Exhibition Is Coming to the UK." *www.anothermanmag.com (Another Man)*, 11 March 2019.

Another Man

This summer, Manchester will play host to a major exhibition of visual art by the great filmmaker David Lynch. For while he's known for his directorial work – *Twin Peaks*, *Mulholland Drive*, *Dune*, *Blue Velvet*, et cetera – he originally trained as a painter, studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Hosted by Manchester International Festival (MIF) and HOME, Manchester, this exhibition will pay tribute to his four decade-long artistic career, displaying paintings, drawings and sculptures. The show itself will be divided into four chapters: *City on Fire*, focusing on his dystopian landscapes; *Nothing Here*, looking at the fragility of the human mind; *Industrial Empire*, showing works examining industry and labour, inspired by Manchester's own industrial heritage; and *Bedtime Stories*, featuring new works reflecting the dark themes of the filmmaker's oeuvre.

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Diehl, Travis. “Lynch in Traffic.” *www.contemporaryartreview.la (CARLA)*, 5 December 2018.

David Lynch, *Sally’s in the Kitchen* (2013). Mixed Media on paper. 22 1/4 x 30 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran.

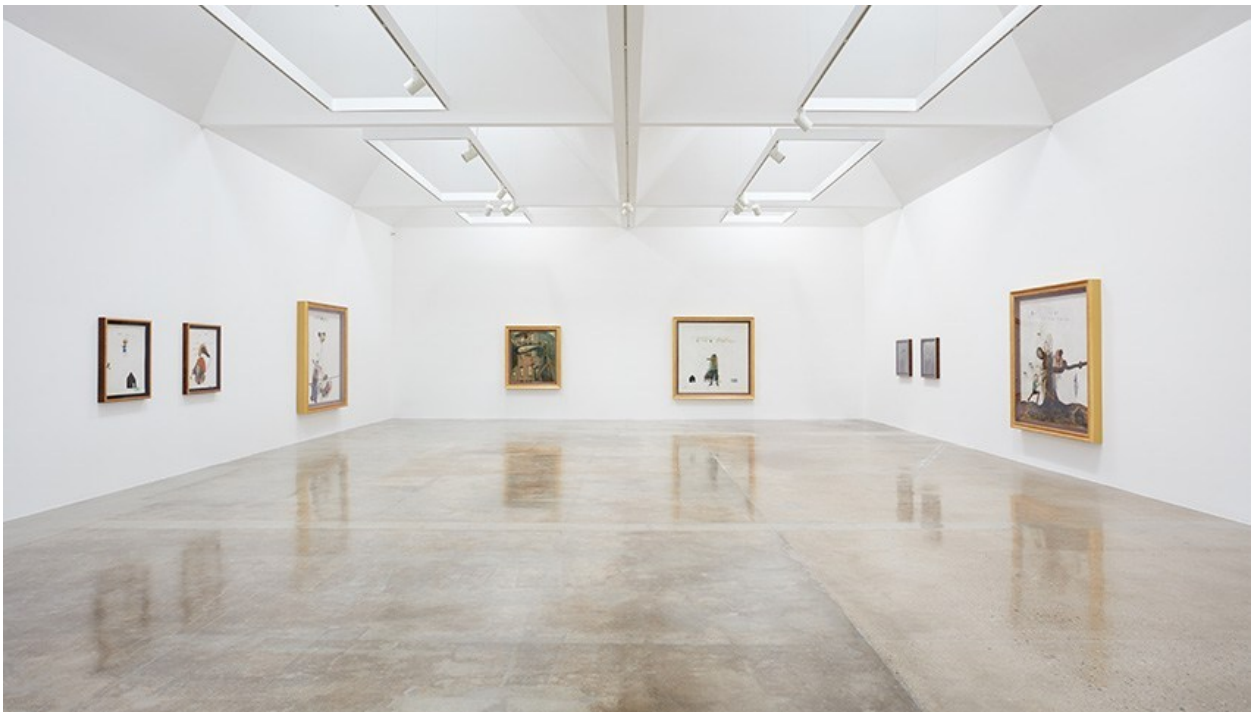
life slips away
it always slips away
sometimes death comes quickly
sometimes you don’t see it coming
but life still slips away
always slips away
–disco song

It was probably not the worming rush hour of Mulholland Drive’s switchbacks that David Lynch had in mind. In his film, the cars move. The plot of *Mullholland Drive* (2001) skims the ridge north of Hollywood then descends into the city of dreams. The opening title takes the form of a road sign in headlights; the first event is a car wreck that robs the main character of her memory. The road is the cusp from which height

Lynch's characters are seduced, then overcome, by the irreality below. The film is famously inconclusive, and endlessly interpreted—a narrative strung up to loop—just as Lynch's feverish, recursive montage "of the subconscious" suggests a psychoanalysis that will never result in cure. Meanwhile, a weekday evening finds the dirt-and scrub-covered Hollywood Hills constipated by flesh and blood—the occasional Bentley or Aston Martin idling among the gardening and pool trucks, the delivery vans having disgorged their antiques and paintings, all packed in by a mob of BMWs and Mercedes-Benzes. The whole social strata of Tinseltown braves these narrow, winding slopes in a traffic jam that, like death, claims both the weary and the rich.

David Lynch, *Sally Floats Out* (2018). Mixed media painting, 31 x 27 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran. Photo: Flying Studio, Los Angeles.

When film grinds to a halt, you have photography—but painting comes just as close to the prosody of all those stalled sports cars, hermetic and inert—the way David Lynch might paint them as black cartoons. "Sally's in the Kitchen," reads one of Lynch's 2013 drawings. Sally isn't pictured. Instead, a plane strafes the ground (emitting bullets, or punctuation, or turds), a man throws up his hands, and the hood of a vintage car erupts in smoke. In *Sally Has 2 Heads* (2013), it's true: a ragdoll rendering of a girl in a red dress has, capping her sloping left arm, a girl's head, and, on her proper neck, the muddy face of a German shepherd, labeled "Dog head." The only other marks on the paper, towards the bottom, describe a row of three cars—green coupe, yellow convertible, black pickup truck—all styled with the languid lines of the 1950s. Their immobility denies the caption: "cars drive by."



David Lynch, *I Was A Teenage Insect* (2018) (installation view). Image courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran. Photo: Flying Studio, Los Angeles.

One anecdote cited in nearly every account of Lynch's paintings serves to insist that Lynch is not merely a filmmaker who dabbles in painting (like too many actors, musicians, politicians, and other would-be polymaths); he is, and was, a painter first. From a 2011 issue of *Purple* magazine:

> Alex Israel: I read somewhere that one day while you were painting you were suddenly captivated by wind.
>
> David Lynch: Actually, I was sitting in a chair, in a space smaller than this room, looking at a painting. I don't remember how big it was, maybe four feet square. All of the sudden the painting sort of started to expand and contract and a wind-like sound came from it. I thought, "Moving painting!" Then I thought, "How could you make a moving painting?" Of course, that's stop motion, that's cinema.[1]

This epiphany, a hallucination of the kind we now call Lynchian, happened while the filmmaker was in art school at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Soon Lynch would drop out and head to film school in Los Angeles, eventually making *Eraserhead* (1977) and the rest. A precocious visual artist even as a child, Lynch trained as a painter, and it was painting that led him to film, and, as if anticipating a press release, he never really stopped painting. (Maybe, though, he has stopped making movies; as of this writing, *Inland Empire*, 2006, was his last feature film.) Moreover, just as the stars of *Mullholland Drive* flail and drown in the fumes of Southland cliché, Lynch is an obsessed painter, a compelled painter, a coffee and cigarettes and studio painter—the very 1950s coiffed and bohemian cliché of a Painter. Lynch even played a "Painter" in John Byrum's *Heart Beat*, 1980—a period piece about Jack Kerouac's inner circle—but was cut from the final print. "All I wanted to do," says the artist, "was paint."[2]

In this sense, too, Lynch's late paintings are stylistically and thematically retrograde. They don't move. His childlike factories and rotary phones idle in the same mid-century iconicity as his notion of what art is, or is for. Lynch's advocates[3] detect an echo of Edward Hopper's diners, say—not to mention his gas stations—but so what if every fluffy stack of pancakes is drizzled with bile? Art "reveals"—but reveals what? *Airplane and Tower*(2013) depicts an elongated plane with a Korean War-era cockpit hurtling towards an obelisk of scaffolding—dare we say, a Washington Monument of the soul. If we perceive something sinister in the juxtaposition of these two simple, innocent shapes, the idea goes, it is because Lynch has channeled an anxiety we've been unable to name. But has he? The work is post- 9/11, and anyway this kind of disaster-masochism isn't such a subconscious so much as a conscious part of the American psyche. Whatever gothic pyromania and domestic abuse seeps through Lynch's cracks has been preempted by (not just his own films, but) the Dada collage of early punk, of the internet, and of the news.

David Lynch, *Sally Has Two Heads* (2013). Mixed media on paper mounted to wood panel, 31 x 27 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran.

It turns out every Lynch painting has the same twist: things that look nice can be mean. This constant intimation of threat is exhausting, revealing mostly the Hollywood banality of our cultural id—Llyn Foulkes with less range, Francis Bacon (an avowed influence of Lynch) but with less alcohol. A grey man holds out a grey potato in *Man with Potato* (2015), and a puss-pink rose labeled "flower" erupts from the dreary sky. In *Sally Floats Out*(2018) the little girl's symbol-shaped house is rendered in a menacing, dark impasto. The singsong title *Billy (and His Friends) Did Find Sally in the Tree*(2018) in fact describes a lynching: Sally has been hanged.

David Lynch, *Billy (and His Friends) Did Find Sally in the Tree* (2018). Mixed media painting, 66 x 66 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran. Photo: Flying Studio, Los Angeles.

There's a narrow ease particular to Lynch's painterly work. It seems approachable, even apprehensible. The paintings appeal to what one reviewer calls the "completist" drive of the Lynch fan.[4] Here on the wall is a painting; but it might also be, if you believe in art the way the '50s did, a window into the auteur's thoughts.[5] Either way, Lynch's paintings and drawings rely on the enduring myth of art as psychoanalytic fodder. Like Lynch's dream-obsessed characters, the collector will spend their life trying to decipher someone else's nightmare—living someone else's life, or acting in it, or just watching. But Lynch has already solved the riddle; there is nothing else.

In Lynch's films, however, the next symbol never resolves the last. Even as their narratives contort the path from dreams to meaning—in *Mullholland Drive*, for instance, each of the two lead actors plays two characters in a way that mystifies the limits of the film's illusion—his art gives up that irresolute, Jungian thrill. Pop surrealism leads to pop psychoanalysis. "My head is disconnected," reads the text above a cartoon man in a grisaille painting of the same name (c.1994); sure enough, a box hovers above a figure's clipped neck. In a large triptych on panel, *Boy Lights Fire* (2010), a mush-faced kid reaches dream-long arms across

a tiny black house to strike a match. Lynch sees childishness—not only the depiction of children, and toy-like rendering, but a faux-naif approach to his subjects—as opening up possibility, returning to the prelapsarian freedom of imagination before we settle into routinized, adult thought. Lynch paints the inescapable tortures of dreams—not the bugs under the perfect green lawn so much as an ineradicable unease with bugs, a hardwired disgust underlying a universal-ish sort of symbolism. BOY. FIRE. HOUSE. Bad. But while his films move on from there, the paintings stay put.

David Lynch, *Ricky Finds out He Has Shit for Brains* (2017). Mixed media painting, 31 x 27 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran. Photo: Flying Studio, Los Angeles.

Thus, Lynch trades the virtuosity of his films for a technically accomplished but rhetorically stunted vision of the plastic arts. He offers an aesthetic fiction: a dedicated insider, with art school chops and a respectable dealer, wielding the aesthetic of Art Brut or Outsider—that is to say, a put-on authenticity. Yet any student of Lynch knows that authenticity is just another sham. Lynch seems to know this too. The paintings and drawings exhibit a transparent attempt to be weird, and to (maybe) symbolize something more than weirdness itself: a *de facto* perversion of authentic expression, as if only fucked-up thought can be true. Naturally. The experience of these spooky inklings comes not as a shock, but as consummation.

Day in and day out, minor screenwriters workshop their scripts in the coffee shops of Los Feliz (not quite East Hollywood, let alone Mulholland), trying to arrive at the right tessellation of Krav Maga guru, gas station, and loaded gun. Lynch's paintings likewise shuffle clichés. This is not what Lynch does in his films, where he banishes cliché to a life behind a dumpster or has cliché's body go undiscovered. We dream in films, not drawings. And, while we're dreaming, those rolling scenes feel vital and threatening in a way that never survives their recollection as waking, static surrealism. The moving image, in contrast, might leverage its action against the clichés it propels, even as set, character, and plot follow familiar paths (the

conventions that Gilles Deleuze calls "the crisis of both the action-image and the American Dream"[6]). On a Mulholland Drive of dusty high beams and midnight runs, Lynch the filmmaker makes cliché into a vehicle.

Lynch's first moving-image work was a hybrid: *Six men getting sick* (1967) consists of a film of six men puking in unison, projected onto a white relief of three more men. Their stomachs well up with red fluid, and they vomit; the film loops. What remains at stake in this artwork isn't so much its bald parable of immobility and disgust, its depiction of men trapped in a Sisyphean barf fest—granted, an appropriate response to the modern condition—but its diagnosable conflict between *moving* and *not*. This dynamic, absent in Lynch's drawings and paintings, is amply illustrated by the city itself: One warm Hollywood evening, a white late-model sedan pulls to the curb in front of a theater. A man rolls down the back passenger window, and vomits, orange, all down the car's white side. People in line outside are revolted, or amused; some don't notice. The car sulks back into traffic.

1 David Lynch, interviewed by Alex Israel, *Purple Magazine*, F/W 2011, issue 16, http://purple.fr/magazine/fw-2011-issue-16/david-lynch/.
2 Rick Barnes, Olivia Neergaard-Holm, and Jon Nguyen, dirs., *David Lynch: The Art Life* (2016; Denmark), film.
3 Robert Cozzolino, *David Lynch: The Unified Field* (Berkeley: U of C Press, 2014).
4 Ken Johnson, "Forever Wild at Heart," *The New York Times*, September 17, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/18/arts/design/exploring-david-lynchs-paintings-and-drawings.html.
5 For instance, Thomas Micchelli describes Lynch's paintings as "chunks of crystalized consciousness that have cracked off his monumental id and fallen to the studio floor, where he picked them up and glued them to ratty sheets of cardboard." Thomas Micchelli, "Shrapnel from the Skies," *Hyperallergic*, October 11, 2014, http://hyperallergic.com/154145/shrapnel-from-the-skies-the-paintings-of-david-lynch/
6 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986), 210.

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Sanderson, Sertan. "Largest David Lynch retrospective to date on show in Maastricht." *www.dw.com (Deutsche Welle)*, 30 November 2018.

Made for minds.

The director's little-known work as an artist focuses on similarly eerie themes as his films do. The Dutch retrospective of Lynch's art, "Someone is in my house," takes visitors to the dark side of the American Dream.

Most people associate the name David Lynch with bizarre movies that dive deeper into the subconscious than many might be comfortable with. Award-winning films like *Wild at Heart* and *Blue Velvet* or the cult TV series *Twin Peaks* have become synonymous with the director, epitomizing his unmistakably disturbing style exploring what lurks underneath the surface of American society.

Still David Lynch is not only a film director but also an accomplished artist, whose paintings, sketches, sculptures, photographs, video installations and mixed media works have been shown around the world. The Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht now brings Lynch's work as an artist to The Netherlands for the first time. The works shown at the exhibition "David Lynch: Someone is in my house" span from Lynch's childhood in the 1950s to his most recent work from 2018.

It is the world's largest Lynch retrospective to date, points out museum director and curator Stijn Huijts, adding that the lesser-known aspect of the filmmaker's career has accompanied him throughout his life: "He has always been a painter. He started at an arts school in Philadelphia and ever since he has continued his practice as a visual artist. In fact, he has spent most of his life doing visual art, more so than doing films."

Bleeding heads, mutilated bodies and sexual violence: the Bonnefantenmuseum show is certainly not for the faint of heart

A walk on the dark side

Walking into the exhibition feels quite like entering one of Lynch's acclaimed screen works — despite Huijts' insistence on regarding Lynch primarily as a visual artist for the purpose of this show. An overall sense of darkness dominates not only the hundreds of Lynch's works on show, but also the special design of the 15 galleries of the exhibition.

"Being in darkness and confusion is interesting to me. But behind it you can rise out of that and see things the way they really are. That there is some sort of truth to the whole thing, if you could just get to that point where you could see it, and live it, and feel it," David Lynch once said of his work.

This darkness plays with the visitors' minds: You will constantly wonder whether you're brave or curious enough to allow the pieces of art to enter your consciousness as Lynch intends. It is clear that his art is meant to challenge its viewers to confront their inner demons, with recurrent themes like sexuality, destruction, violence and decay standing in stark contrast to Lynch's often childlike style and use of imagery.

'Someone is in my house'

The youthful imagery of his works often appears to trivialize or dismiss the weight of the terror it depicts. At the same time it feels like a public appeal to embrace all the ugly, painful and downright abysmal aspects of the human condition. The art seen at the exhibition is certainly not pretty by most standards, but it is beautiful in its capacity to reach out to a deep place within each visitor.

Some of Lynch's works feature phrases, which he says add additional layers to his art

This profound journey through the third floor of the Bonnefantenmuseum is accompanied by peculiar sounds wherever you go — whether coming from sonic art installations or the soundtracks of short films shown at the exhibition. The overall experience is immersive on multiple levels and takes visitors exactly to the kinds of strange places that they will be familiar with from Lynch's movies.

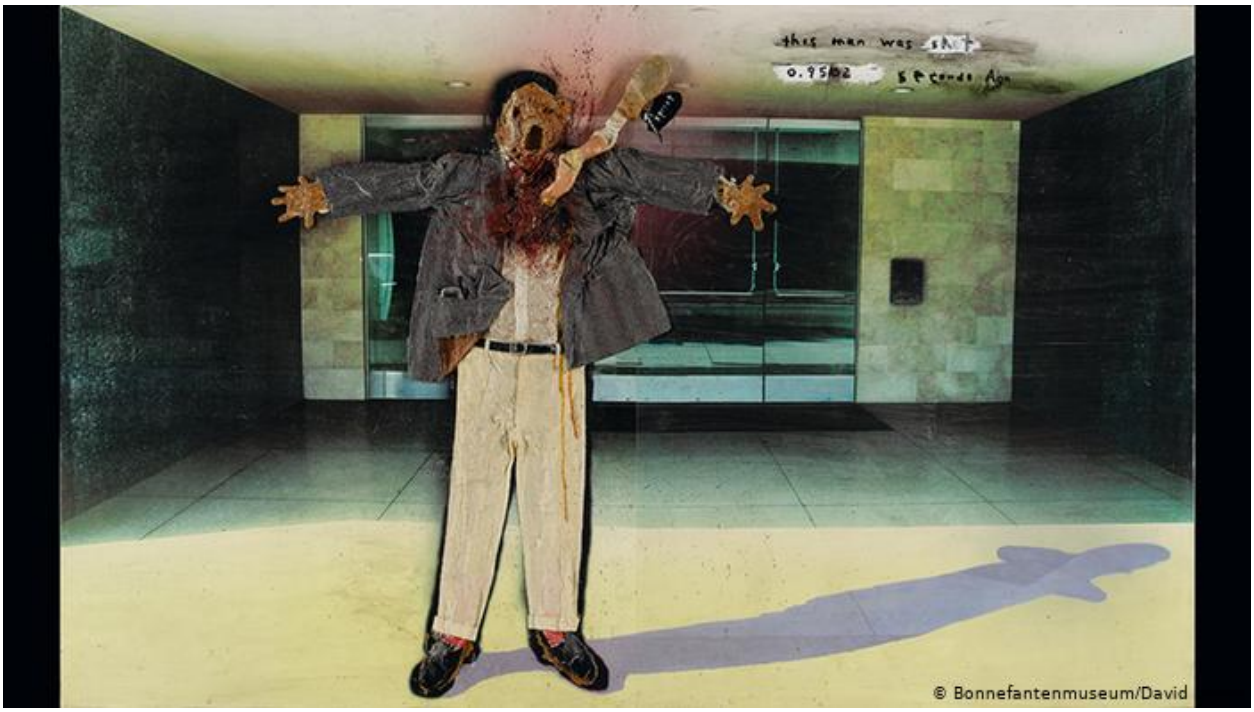
While Lynch fans always have the comfort of knowing that they are merely viewers when they watch his movies, visiting the exhibition in Maastricht, they actually become protagonists in this Lynchian world. They will leave the exhibition realizing that they were the actual intruders referred to in the eerie title of the show, "Someone is in my house."

Deconstructing America

Indeed, one of the many recurrent themes or metaphors seen in Lynch's art is houses — another fact that the title of the exhibition picks up on. Both in his work as a director and as a visual artist, David Lynch enjoys shining light on things that happen behind closed doors in residences of all kinds. In fact, the kind of building he chooses often communicates something about the message of a particular scene in a movie or, in this case, the intention behind a work of art.

Often set in US suburbia, Lynch's imagery exalts and simultaneously demystifies Americana. The people depicted in his paintings, sketches and photographs look like fallen angels and failed heroes. They have names like Bob, Billy and George etched into the canvasses, adding further layers of humanity to Lynch's surreal tragedies. Short texts and phrases endow them with a story; one that typically makes the already twisted and deformed expressionistic characters appear even further removed from reality.

"The phrases give birth to a whole reality and world," Lynch says about these works. He remains a storyteller, even as a visual artist.



Though Lynch insists that he is apolitical, his works often reflect politically loaded topics, such as gun culture in the US

Entering the dream world

The installation right by the entrance of the museum perfectly encapsulates his work as both a director and a visual artist. David Lynch fans will recognize this dreamlike "Red Room" — also known as the "Waiting Room" — from his *Twin Peaks* television series: Towering red velvet curtains float just above the floor, where a black-and-white zigzag pattern dizzies visitors into a state of frenzy — if you stay there long enough.

In the background, a looped soundtrack from the TV series communicates distress and comfort at the same time. The music and the pattern on the floor complement each other, transporting the visitor to another realm, with these opposites creating a strange dream world.

Perhaps this room is a metaphor for the interwoven nature of all juxtaposed things in life, which is something that David Lynch tries to convey in all his works: black and white, day and night, good and evil, fear and love, yin and yang — and even film and art.

"David Lynch: Someone is my House" runs from November 30, 2018 through April 28, 2019. The English language catalog was published by Prestel Publishing.

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Marlow, Tim. "David Lynch at the Bonnefantenmuseum: November's Must-See Museum Exhibitions." *www.sothebys.com (Sotheby's Museum Network)*, November 2018.

Sotheby's EST. 1744 Museum Network

Fans of David Lynch's enigmatic and surreal visual style, a hallmark of cult-classic movies Eraserhead, Blue Velvet, Muhholand Drive, and the famed TV show Twin Peaks, can see the same mysterious and unified vision in the lesser-known artworks of the American filmmaker. They'll be on display in the Bonnefantenmuseum's retrospective devoted to Lynch – a showcase of 400 works that date from the 1960s to present day.

David Lynch: Someone is in my House, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, 30 November 2018–28 April 2019

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Pagel, David. "Review: David Lynch's paintings reveal insecurities of adolescence and maligned misfits." *www.latimes.com (Los Angeles Times)*, 26 October 2018.

Los Angeles Times

David Lynch, "I Was a Teenage Insect," 2018, mixed media painting, 66 x 66 inches. (Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles)

David Lynch's 11 works at Kayne Griffin Corcoran give intimate form to the insecurities of adolescence, especially as they echo in the memories of adults who may not have outgrown them.

Yet not a whiff of self-pity can be sniffed in Lynch's wickedly endearing images. That, along with their introspective nature, makes them stick out like sore thumbs in today's culture of revenge, in which powerful

men pretend to be victims, all the better to shore up their privilege and solidify their dominion over anyone who rubs their thin skin the wrong way.

Lynch's pictures of individuals falling short and failing miserably never suggest that the trials and tribulations of growing up and being maligned as a misfit are anything other than ordinary — certainly not experiences that justify bitterness and resentment and fuel the flames of lifelong anger.

Bad things happen in Lynch's shallow-relief sculptures: pets die, children cry, toys break, teens get ridiculed, parents are unavailable and no one, not a single soul, understands — much less cares.

But the doll-size inhabitants of Lynch's dystopian dioramas seem to deal with everything well enough. A sense of unflappable equanimity spills from his forlorn men, women and children, their handmade clothing, ceramic limbs and mutant faces saying, in no uncertain terms, "Life is tough. Things go wrong. Get used to it."

That's the same message delivered by the pictures Norman Rockwell painted for the covers of the Saturday Evening Post.

Both Rockwell and Lynch home in on what it means to live in a world in which things don't always turn out as you want them to — and circumstance are more difficult than you imagined. Both also believe that that's not the end of the world.

For Rockwell, redemption would be found in our ability to tolerate one another's differences. For Lynch, that starts with ourselves — learning to live with our shortcomings, not blaming others for them, and, best of all, sharing such stories with strangers and loved ones and anyone else able to laugh at themselves.

Kayne Griffin Corcoran, 1201 S. La Brea Ave., (310) 586-6886, through Nov. 3. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.kaynegriffincorcoran.com

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Krug, Simone. "Critics' Picks: David Lynch." *www.artforum.com (Artforum)*, 18 October 2018.

ARTFORUM

David Lynch, *Billy (and His Friends) Did Find Sally in the Tree*, 2018, mixed-media painting, 66 x 66".

David Lynch
Kayne Griffin Corcoran
1201 South La Brea Avenue
September 8–November 3, 2018

In 1906, the art critic, writer, and anarchist Félix Fénéon published a series of witty, epigrammatic three-line news stories in the Parisian newspaper *Le Matin*. These abbreviated reports, later published in English as *Novels in Three Lines* (2007), are striking in their capacity to convey vast, intricate plots with economy. The eleven mixed-media paintings in David Lynch's exhibition achieve a similar effect in their chimerical yet aesthetically reduced nature. Lynch pares down the outlandish sensationalism of his best-known work in film and television, presenting lone characters and strange creatures in monochromatic landscapes. Still, the scenes are unmistakably Lynchian, tinged with a surrealist, macabre, and often hallucinatory tone.

Scrawled captions lend a storybook quality to this body of work and ground the narrative arcs. The painting *I Was a Teenage Insect* (all works cited, 2018) depicts a single yellow smudge wearing jeans and a striped shirt, flanked by the outline of a small house and a white picket fence, below the titular refrain. *Billy (and His Friends) Did Find Sally in the Tree*, whose title is likewise inscribed on the canvas, features a figure with spindly antennae reaching for a knobby tree where a red-faced creature in crumpled garb is perched, screaming, arms outstretched in shock. A woman in blue, presumably Sally, has hanged herself from a branch. The narrative is at once clear, paranoid, and enigmatic. Franz Kafka would undoubtedly approve of these domestic nightmares.

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Appleford, Steve. "In Conversation: David Lynch, the director as painter, festival impresario and ant collaborator." *www.latimes.com (Los Angeles Times)*, 28 September 2018.

Los Angeles Times

David Lynch at Los Angeles' Kayne Griffin Corcoran gallery, where an exhibition of his paintings, "I Was a Teenage Insect," is on view through Nov. 3. (Marcus Yam / Los Angeles Times)

On the windowsill of his painting studio in the Hollywood Hills, David Lynch has enlisted a colony of ants to help create some art. He's molded a tiny human head out of mortician's wax and filled it with cheese, chicken and sugar. Two nights earlier, Lynch filmed the ants in a feral march of disintegration.

"They're hollowing that head out. It's incredible," the acclaimed director said with a smile. "They work 24/7. The dish behind it is filled with Coca-Cola, and they're nuts about Coca-Cola, and they're nuts about what's inside that head."

Lynch may have picked up a camera to capture the ants in another of his explorations into the surreal and grotesque, but these days, he's just as likely to grab a paint brush. Since completing last year's long-deferred third season of his television series "Twin Peaks," Lynch has largely devoted himself to his original medium: painting.

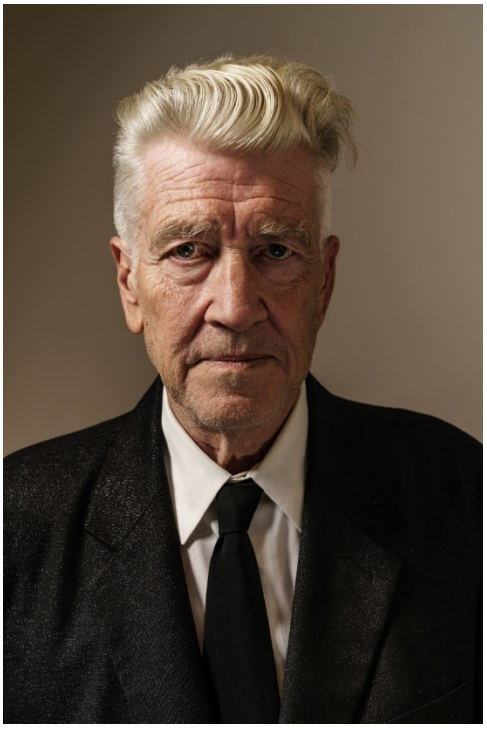
Many of his newest paintings, collected in the exhibition "I Was a Teenage Insect," are now at Kayne Griffin Corcoran through Nov. 3. (A series of his lithographs, "David Lynch: Dreams — A Tribute to Fellini," are at the Fellini Foundation at the Maison du Diable in Sion, Switzerland, through Dec. 16.) The

"Teenage Insect" pieces are large mixed-media works of what he calls "childlike distortion," filled with mystery, terror and bliss, and occasional words scrawled across the canvas.

In the late-1960s, before he moved to Los Angeles and made "Eraserhead," his first full feature, Lynch studied painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia. All these years later, he's at it still in his mostly open-air studio, leaving a trail of spent cigarettes and splashes of coffee on the concrete floor.

In addition to his painting, Lynch released a memoir of sorts this summer, "Room to Dream," written with Kristine McKenna, and a book of photography called "Nudes." He's also preparing for his annual Festival of Disruption — with music, film and art — at the Theatre at Ace Hotel on Oct. 13 and 14.

The event, which this year includes guests Francis Ford Coppola, Grace Jones and Carrie Brownstein, raises funds for the David Lynch Foundation, established to promote the benefits of Transcendental Meditation. Sharing the technique that has been essential to his life and work is now a central mission for the artist: "Every human being has got a treasury inside."



David Lynch at the Kayne Griffin Corcoran Gallery in Los Angeles. (Marcus Yam / Los Angeles Times)

> *Francis Bacon says there is zero story in his work. He hates stories. Me, I love stories. The words help the story, and I like the shape of words.*
>
> *-DAVID LYNCH*

The audience for an exhibition can be much smaller than for a film. Do you feel the same about both?

It's the same showing a film or a lithograph or a painting. You build a thing to be seen and experienced mainly for yourself. What's thrilling in cinema is to go into a great theater with a giant screen, beautiful sound and experiencing what you built. You can see it and feel so good about it. You hope that others will feel good about it too. That's not always the case.

There is an expression: "Man has control over action alone, never the fruit of the action." And that is really true in art, painting and cinema. You do the best you can, and then you release it. It depends on the way the world is, who is in the audience. Everybody is different on the surface.

When you were an art student in the '60s, it was the time of pop art. Did you feel connected to what was going on?

No. Pop art, I'm not wild about. The same way with film — I'm not in the film world so much. So you just concentrate on the ideas you've fallen in love with.

Does Francis Bacon tower above the rest in terms of who initially influenced you?

Yeah. In 1966, I went to New York and saw a Francis Bacon show at the Marlborough Gallery, and it was a huge influence and inspiration. Ed Kienholz and Francis Bacon are two of my favorites.

There are a lot of words incorporated into your new paintings. Do the words come first, or are they in reaction to the image?

Sometimes they come first, and sometimes they come last. They're essential to me. Francis Bacon says there is zero story in his work. He hates stories. Me, I love stories. The words help the story, and I like the shape of words.

Are the stories based on experiences?

No, they're based on ideas that come. I always equate it to fishing. You're out fishing and you don't know what you're going to catch. And you don't know how long it's going to take to catch it. And you don't know that you're going to love the fish that you catch. You're just fishing for ideas. Some ideas seem to come from another place. It's daydreaming and thinking, and once in a while, you'll catch an idea that you love. But you've got to have patience to go out and lower the hook.

A visitor at the Maison du Diable in Sion, Switzerland, looks at artwork by David Lynch in the exhibition "David Lynch: Dreams — A Tribute to Fellini," on view through Dec. 16. (Jean-Christophe Bott / EPA-EFE / REX)

You've always painted, but when your film career took off, you didn't really pursue exhibitions.

I had a couple of shows when I was a student at the academy. Then there were no shows for a long, long time. And I didn't really have any money for a setup for painting until after "Blue Velvet." I had one show

during "Dune" at this gallery in Puerto Vallarta, where [director] John Huston came to see the show. He bought a watercolor from me. It was pretty great.

You've always been interested in things that are decayed or wounded in some way

The textures in those things are really incredible — when things pop open and fester in a dance of organic phenomenon, the textures and the mood, the way they are shaped. It's just unbelievable what's going on in nature.

Do your ideas surprise you?

If I get into a thing, and a new idea pops up, it's a thrill beyond the beyond. It happens through action and reaction. Sometimes you get to a place where the thing isn't working and you can't see your way out, so you bite the bullet and destroy. And in destruction, sometimes comes something completely thrilling. You can't be afraid to destroy.

As with your films, you don't like explaining your paintings.

It doesn't do any good. A lot of painters, they talk like crazy. I just don't get it. It's there on the wall. There's a thing that happens: a person stands in front of a painting, and they are going to react based on what's inside the person. Everybody's experience is a little different or a lot different. Some people hate the thing. Some people love the thing. Some people are lukewarm. The work stays the same.

You've often spent time as a still photographer. A few years ago, you put out a book of photos you took of factories. And you recently released a book of nude still photography.

I'm not alone; I love the female form, and I like finding these shapes and the way light plays on it. It's so great for photography — black-and-white and color. But black-and-white can be so beautiful with abstractions. I photograph factories in 35 mm. I really want to photograph some old places in downtown L.A. before it changes too much.

With "Inland Empire" in 2006, you were among the first to shoot a feature film with a digital camera. As the technology has evolved, are you comfortable with the near-perfection of modern digital?

It depends on the idea. A lot of times, if you see too much, there's no mystery. It's how you light a thing. Early 35 mm wasn't so sharp. It just had a feel that really served some things so well. The beautiful thing about digital is you can manipulate it like crazy when you're finished. You go in with hi-res and perfect focus, perfect exposure, but then you can tear it apart, you can degrade it, you can do anything. It's so beautiful.

You started your Festival of Disruption in Los Angeles, and it's grown into an annual event.

We've got a great team running it. They run everything by me, but they're really taking care of it. It gives you a really great feeling when the festival is done. It's always about disrupting the bad and bringing in the new good. A lot of people don't believe for a second that peace is possible, but it is and is going to be.

What drives you to try all these different creative mediums?

I find that every medium talks to us, if you just start doing it. Watercolor paper is a certain way, and watercolor paint is a certain way. You say, "Oh, this is different from oil painting on a canvas." Different things happen. You start to get a dialogue and a feel for what it does. It's the same with every single medium. They're infinitely deep. You can't exhaust it.

Any mediums left to try?

Sewing. I got an industrial sewing machine. I would like to be able to sew things and make stuff. I would like to know how to weld as well. I like to watch these car shows where they customize cars. Working with metal is just so beautiful. But TIG welding, you need these tanks of gas, and it sort of scares me; I would want to put them in cement bunkers in case they blow up. But welding is an art.

David Lynch: "I Was a Teenage Insect"
Where: Kayne Griffin Corcoran, 1201 S. La Brea Ave., Los Angeles
When: Tues.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m., through Nov. 3
Info: (310) 586-6886, kaynegriffincorcoran.com

David Lynch's Festival of Disruption
Where: The Theatre at Ace Hotel,
When: Oct. 13-14; day sessions begin at 10:30 a.m., night programs at 8 p.m.
Tickets: $55 (for single day-session pass) - $999 (for donor-level two-day pass)

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Greenberger, Alex. "'I Like Dogs with a Human Head': David Lynch Shows New Paintings in Los Angeles." *www.artnews.com (ARTnews)*, 7 September 2018.

ARTNEWS

David Lynch, *I was a Teenage Insect*, 2018, mixed media painting. Robert Wedemeyer/Courtesy the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran

In the late 1980s, actress Isabella Rossellini brought the New York gallerist Leo Castelli to David Lynch's painting studio in Los Angeles. About their first encounter, Castelli, a shrewd dealer known for his discerning eye, said at the time, "This man knows what he's doing."

Lynch had been making paintings, many of them depicting his nightmarish version of American suburbia, for two decades, though he was known then entirely for his films, among them the 1977 cult favorite *Eraserhead*and the 1986 absurdist murder mystery *Blue Velvet*. When Castelli gave Lynch a solo show at his SoHo gallery in 1989, the rest of the New York art world took its first look at the by-then-notable filmmaker's paintings—though with reactions that split. One critic writing for *Artforum* called the show "eye-opening," while Roberta Smith, in the *New York Times*, called the paintings "familiar, unoriginal, and slick."

Decades later, it continues to strike some as a surprise that Lynch, an Academy Award–nominated director whose status is secure in Hollywood lore, has another significant practice devoted to painting, sculpture, printmaking, drawing, photography, and more—so much so that a 2012 essay about his studio work in *Hyperallergic* took the title "David Lynch's Art Doesn't Suck." But the art world has gradually warmed to Lynch. His paintings were the subject of a retrospective at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art—his alma mater—in 2014. A feature-length documentary about his art practice, *David Lynch: The Art Life*, followed in 2016. And this season, ahead of an exhibition opening in November at the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht, Holland, Lynch's art is on show at Los Angeles's Kayne Griffin Corcoran gallery, which has represented him since 2011. The exhibition, which showcases paintings, watercolors, and drawings under the title "I Was a Teenage Insect," opens September 8 and runs into November.

So how does Lynch himself feel about his work getting such visibility at long last? "It's OK!" he said, speaking by phone from his office in L.A. "But it's just been recently OK, because they don't really take painters seriously if you're known for something else. You're supposed to only do one thing, right? But now things have changed."

Lynch's paintings are logical counterparts to his films, with subject matter that is, to put it mildly, quite weird. The works in the new gallery show feature, among other things, an insect-person by a small house, a woman floating in the ether, a man gazing at a potato, and a person being chased by some nondescript evil force down a hallway. Lynch, who has often said he doesn't consider himself all that strange, is content

to keep his art mysterious, speaking in oneiric statements that may or may not hint at what's happening in the work.

David Lynch, *Every Girl's Dream*, 2017, ink and watercolor on paper. Flying Studio/Courtesy the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran

Text, in some cases, helps viewers along. The painting titled *Big Sheep Did Eat My Brain* (2018) features a note, scrawled in inky paint, reading "I have been here before. When?" With such words in the midst of a drawing of a clock, it recalls some of the time-traveling antics of *Twin Peaks: The Return* and *Mulholland Dr*. Another work, titled *Every Girl's Dream* (2017), features a nude female figure embraced by a shadowy monster, along with the words "Sally said this NOT ME!"

Asked whether narratives play out in the paintings, Lynch said, "Yes, I love a narrative—a little story, a small story, as I say. I like to have something going on with the characters." Prodded for more information, he continued, a little cryptically, "Sometimes the story comes first, but sometimes the narrative comes out of the work later. It depends how it goes, but again, I like to have the thing feeling a certain way. If it wasn't for words, it just wouldn't be complete."

The paintings are raw and almost gross because of their chunky, tumorous-looking globs of material. "I use a bunch of different things," he said. "I like this thing I call 'organic phenomena'—when you mix this with

that, you get a fantastic thing sometimes. It's total mixed media—all different kinds of things in there." What exactly constitutes such "things" remains a mystery: With a knowing laugh, Lynch declined to identify all his materials. "But I use a lot of glue, acrylic paint, watercolors, tempera, cigarette ashes," he said. "I use, you know, a whole bunch of different things."

David Lynch, *The Thoughts of Mr. Bee-Man*, 2018, mixed media painting. Robert Wedemeyer/Courtesy the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran

Lynch has taken to calling his studio practice his "art life," though his work in different mediums intersects. From an early age, long before he even thought of making movies, Lynch knew he wanted to study art. In high school, his friend's father gave him a copy of Robert Henri's book *The Art Spirit*, which theorized that art and life are one and the same, and that artworks are the records of creativity incited by unseen forces. He went onto study, from 1966 to 1967, at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. One of his first major mature works, *Six Men Getting Sick* (1967), was a painting that featured the heads of a few men on a panel. It initially included a projection that made it appear as if the men were vomiting, all while a police siren wailed. In certain ways, it could count as Lynch's first film.

He insists he does not know much about contemporary art. "I know nothing about the L.A. art scene!" he said. "I don't know anything about the New York art scene, the Paris art scene, the German art scene. In the same way with film, I'm not a film buff."

He does, however, favor certain artists and styles. "I like childish, bad painting," he said in reference to the French Art Brut painter Jean Dubuffet. He dismissed conventional figurative work as "flat" and "like a furniture-store sort of thing," and prefers instead Dubuffet's "distortions." Other artists he likes include Julian Schnabel, Anselm Kiefer, Edward and Nancy Kienholz, and Georg Baselitz.

David Lynch, *Woman with Small Dead Bird*, 2018, mixed media painting. Robert Wedemeyer/Courtesy the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran

And then there is Francis Bacon, whose work Lynch can distinctly remember seeing as a young man at New York's Marlborough Gallery in 1966. "He's a huge inspiration," Lynch said of the painter of meat slabs and tortured men in inscrutable rooms. In his show at Kayne Griffin Corcoran, he alludes to some of the formative Bacon works he saw, which were framed in gold and placed under glass. "It's framed like a stage—you are looking through something to see," he said. "This is thrilling to me." His new works are similarly set in gold and silver frames he crafted himself.

Strange combinations of animals and humans recur. In one work, *The Thoughts of Mr. Bee-Man* (2018), a cartoonish person appears to have merged with an insect form, with a body that has become a stinger. What might he be thinking about when producing such hybrids of animals and humans? "I'm thinking about animals and humans," he said, as if the answer said all that could be uttered on the subject. Certain hybridizations please him more than others. "I like dogs with a human head. I've done sheep with a human head. I like combos like that."

Lynch explained that he paints every day. "That's all I do, just paint in my studio," he said. He also maintains a practice of Transcendental Meditation that aids in his work process. "People who have this ability to transcend start expanding consciousness with those all-positive qualities, and it serves the work," he said. "Ideas flow more freely—you're happier in the work. It's a form of meditation that allows a human being to experience the deepest eternal level of life. And in the field that you transcend is unbounded creativity, intelligence, love, happiness, energy, peace, power. It's a huge blessing, for the work and for life."

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Enright, Robert. "Dark Enlightenment: An Interview with David Lynch." *Border Crossings*, August 2018, pp. 44-55.

1

DARK ENLIGHTENMENT

An Interview with David Lynch

by Robert Enright

2

David Lynch, a painting student in 1967 at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, was working on an all-black painting of a night garden when he sensed that a wind, mysteriously generated from within the canvas, stirred the leaves he had just rendered. The direction this apprehension would suggest to him is now history: David Lynch the painter became David Lynch the filmmaker. But like all stories, this narrative is not so tidily packaged. The truth is, Lynch never stopped painting and drawing, and he has since added still photography and music to the art forms that compel his interest. But in his varied production as an artist, he has painted for a longer period of time than he has done anything else. He admits that finding his voice as a painter has been "a total struggle. For me, the grand experiment has been to keep chasing the thing I haven't found."

What he has found is a way of presenting what he calls humanity's "deep darkness" in unique and unmistakably Lynchian ways. The startling intensities of his films, their sense of engaging us in a lived-in, visceral experience, are undeniable. His film history is a nightmare from which we want to awaken, then we're not so sure, and we change our minds. His work has about it a distinct quality of menace and danger, while at the same time it can be comic and endearingly preposterous.

There is something inexplicably innocent about Lynch's approach to art making. He has said the mind "is a big beautiful place, but it is also pitch-dark." His various art practices move in the direction of that beautiful pitch-darkness. He makes what his imagination wants to see, and the nature and tone of that making seem unaffected by any sense of recognized transgression. When asked whether his motivation matters in assigning meaning

1. David Lynch, *I Was a Teenage Insect*, 2018, mixed media painting, 66 x 66 inches. Images courtesy the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles.

2. *Sally Floats Out*, 2018, mixed media painting, 31 xx 27 inches.

to a work, he is adamant in his denial. "Not one little bit. I always say in cinema that I need to know what it means to me, but I know full well that there are millions of interpretations for the work."

His films and paintings, then, are not him; they are merely made by him. It would be incorrect to assume that they are also mirrorly made. They contain ideas, attitudes and characters, but they are not reflections or traces of his own psychological trauma. "Things end up in painting or in cinema because they're in the world," he says by way of explanation, "but the artist doesn't have to suffer to show suffering." What is no less startling than the darkness of his films is the lightness of his world view, a perspective he attributes to his 45-year-long involvement with mantric Transcendental Meditation. It is a surprise to discover that in conversation he is completely unlike his films and paintings. He is a pure example of an unfettered imagination.

During the interview I asked him about an oil and mixed media painting called *Bob Loves Sally Until She Is Blue in the Face* from 2000. Written on the roughed-up surface of the canvas are the words "Oh yes," the kind of rote encouragement that turns up in every porn film. But Bob is out of place; he seems to be a character imported from a shunga central casting studio. I read the painting in the same way I looked at a lithograph like *I Hold You Tight*, 2009, where a man's long arms end in fingers that seem to be strangling his naked girlfriend more than romancing her; or in *Pete Goes to His Girlfriend's House*, 2009, where Pete holds a gun in one hand and a knife in the other. It's a visitation devoutly to be avoided.

I asked Lynch whether Bob and Sally's amorous encounter was one of his Janus works, an image that looks simultaneously in opposite directions. Being made love to until you're blue in the face could be about extreme passion or as easily describe the effect of murderous violence. The work could be seen as a kind of comic snuff painting. David seemed surprised at my question and his response spoke to a guileless phenomenology. "See, there's that beholder again," he said. "It's just what you see."

The following telephone interview was conducted on June 28, 2018, in Los Angeles. David Lynch's one-person exhibition will run at Kayne Griffin Corcoran in Los Angeles from September 7 to November 11, 2018; and a major survey show of his work in all media, called "Someone is in my House," will be on exhibition at the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht from November 30, 2018, to April 28, 2019.

BORDER CROSSINGS: The story about the moving painting is well known and has a Paul on the Road to Damascus conversion quality about it. Is there an equivalent story about your devotion to painting, which, in some ways, you've stayed with longer than filmmaking?

DAVID LYNCH: There is. I was always drawing when I was little and did some painting and loved it, but I never thought of it as something an adult would do. In my eighth grade our family moved to Virginia and I started high school there. I was over at my girlfriend's house one evening and I went outside into her front yard. Some people had come over and one of them was named Toby Keeler. He went to a private school, so I was meeting him for the first time, and we got talking and he told me his father was a painter. At first I thought he was a house painter, but he said, "No, no, a fine art painter." And a bomb went off in my brain. It was like I was one way before he said that and I was completely different after he said it. I just thought, that's what I want to do. All I wanted was to be a painter. And it went like that. It led quite quickly to this thing of dedicating my life to painting and the art life. It was the most freeing thing—you smoke cigarettes, you drink coffee and you paint.

That's where Robert Henri's book *The Art Spirit* comes in?

Yes. You get deeper and deeper and deeper into it; you find your way and your own voice. It has been a total struggle. So many painters find a way, but for me the grand experiment has been to keep chasing the thing I haven't found. It has to do with organic phenomena, with paint and sculpture flowing together and with ideas in that world. But this world of painting is the best. It's fantastic, and that talk many years ago in the front yard opened the door. I knew it once Toby said it.

The first drawing reproduced in the large Steidl book of works on paper is a written piece that says, "I love to draw and I've been drawing off and on since I was real little." You reverse

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2

1. Installation view, "David Lynch: Naming," 2013, Kayne Griffin Corcoran.

2. *Change the Fuckin' Channel Fuckface*, 2008–09, mixed media on canvas, 72 x 120 inches.

3. *Pete Goes to His Girlfriend's House*, 2009, mixed media on cardboard, 82 x 130 inches.

3

the "d" on "drawing" and then sign it "David" the way a child would.
Yes, this childlike thing is one of the keys, this freedom in not having a bunch of intellectual stuff blocking the flow. I like crude, childlike, organic things. Nature plays a part, and it's hard to say in words, but it's a feeling that involves paint and textures and juxtaposition of shapes. It's not intellectual and it involves bad painting and bad mistakes, which are so beautiful once you get into them. We have so many uptight things in us that it's really important to break it all down and get into that fantastic, childlike world.

Watching you making a painting in *The Art Life*, the 2017 documentary, is fascinating because what's evident is your process in trying things out to see if they work. It's almost as if you construct the painting more than you paint it. You put it together.
A lot of it is that way, and then I have to be able to suddenly destroy something to find that next thing. A lot of times out of destruction you find something that is really organic and beautiful.

At one point you're trying to put a word up in the upper left corner of a canvas and you finally say "motherfucker" because you can't get the drill to make the hole you want. It looks as if you're not as good a carpenter as I know you are, because you can build everything from sheds to houses.
Well, that's the thing. I love carpentry and I so respect great carpenters. But in the world of painting, bad carpentry is what's more pleasing.

I'm impressed by how many art forms you work with. How do you know which one—from film to painting to photography to lithography—is the best vehicle for the idea or the image that you want to get across?
That's a good question. I think the idea tells you that. I have this theory that every medium talks to you. You have a dialogue and you understand it by getting to know it. So with lithography you do this and this and this and it looks like that. You get the hang of it; you get the dialogue going, you know what it's going to do. It's a lithography way to realize those ideas. So there are ideas for lithography, there are ideas for painting, for cinema, there are ideas for furniture. These ideas tell you which medium to choose and what to do once you've made that choice.

When talking about *Mulholland Drive*, you said that you don't set out to do a certain thing but that the ideas tell you what the film's going to be. I assume something similar happens in painting—the act of painting is to follow what the idea behind the painting is telling you.
In a film all these things happen mostly in the script form. It's not like you just pour it out. It's a lot of action and reaction to get it to feel correct in the script form. And if it feels correct there, that's your guide for filming. In painting I always say you just need an idea to get you out of the chair. Then it's a process of action and reaction; you do what you thought the idea was telling you and you can like it or not, but it gives you another idea. It's always a process of acting and reacting until the thing is finished.

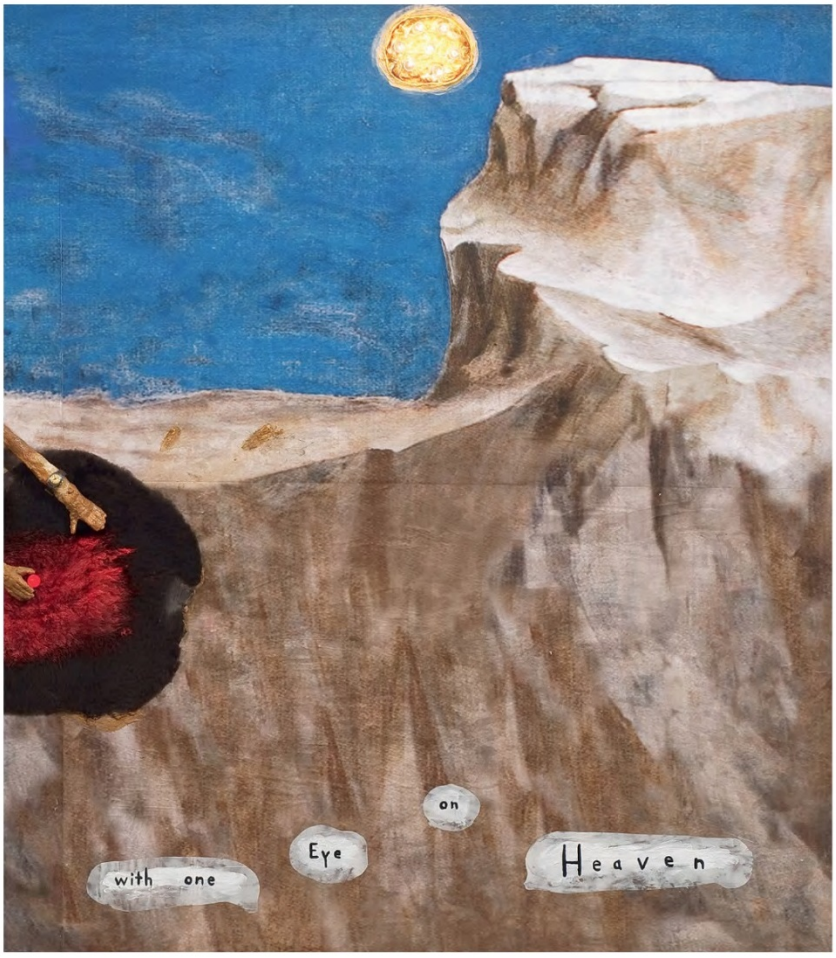
Writers will say that at a certain point in writing a novel, a character will take over the story. They're almost not in control anymore. Does that also happen when you're making a painting, when the process is taking over rather than your directing it?
It's not that the process is taking over; the ideas are taking over—always the ideas are guiding the

Holding onto the Relative, 2008, mixed media on canvas, 72 x 120 inches.

boat. I say we don't do anything without an idea. It comes to a point where you say, "Oh my goodness, this is it," where the idea is so strong that you just complete it.

Have you deliberately kept your visual art practice separate from your filmmaking activity? Have you been careful to keep them discrete?
Absolutely. All the time I was painting, there was this attitude that Sunday painters are hobby painting. It was so much bullshit. I always think of painting and I have always painted in between films. But I was known for filmmaking and you're not supposed to be doing other things. Now, that's all changed and people are into different media. They always were but now you're given permission to do them. It's a better world.

Do you have a sense that your various art practices have been cross-generative? Does one feed the other?



Sometimes, but it's pretty separate. We all have our likes and dislikes. There are millions of ideas out there and you're going to fall in love with certain ones and someone else will fall in love with other ones. We're looking for those ideas that we can fall in love with, and some of them are cinema ideas and some of them are painting ideas.

I can see evidence of your admiration for Francis Bacon and the way that certain figures get distorted in *Lost Highway*, and in some of your lithographs the figures in bed have a Baconish quality.
I love Bacon. He's a huge influence and his distortion of the human figure is so important. I like childlike distortion as well, which I call "bad painting." It's like the Blues. It seems really simple but in its simplicity it's hard to get that true feel. There's a certain way that childlike things get distorted. It's really, really difficult to get it to feel right but it is possible.

One of the things that struck me about a lot of your paintings is they imply a simple narrative. A man, a woman, an insect or a dog will interact with one another doing simple things, like an insect bites a woman.
Yes. I did a series of photographs called "Small Stories." Bacon said he hated stories; he didn't want any story, but I like a story in the painting and I like the words to go with the painting. I like the way words give it the texture of letters.

One of the compelling and explosive things about your work is the way you use text and letters. Was that with you from the beginning?
Not in the beginning. The first thing was more three-dimensional stuff. In the '60s I would glue things onto the painting and then in the '80s I started rubber-stamping little letters onto artist's paper and cutting them out. They reminded me of little teeth and I would put them on to the edge of the painting and into the title.

So the words are written; they're not found.
No. I stamp them. I made many, many As, many Bs, and then I'd use them to perform the words.

Your language fragments often carry a story that precedes and also anticipates what could develop out of the scenario we're looking at, like in *Pete Goes to His Girlfriend's House* (2009), *Change the Fuckin' Channel Fuckface* (2008–09) or *I Burn Pinecone and Throw in Your House* (2009). There are such rich implications in the things these characters say. Is there a built-in narrative in these paintings that takes us beyond and outside the frame of our looking?

I always say every viewer who goes up to a painting creates a circle; the painting goes into the person and they react in a certain way, depending on how they are because on the surface we're all different, and then it goes back into the painting. They get this dialogue going and the viewer walks away with a certain thing and the next person might walk away with another thing. It's so beautiful how that thing can talk to us.

Is the painting telling you something specific that might be different from the way that I would view any particular painting? Does your motivation in making the work matter?
Not one little bit. I always say in cinema that I need to know what it means to me, but I know full well that there are millions of interpretations for the work. And every interpretation, every person's take, is valid. At a screening in a big theatre filled with people, all the frames of the film are exactly the same, the film is the same length, the sound is the same, but everybody's going to get something a little bit different. And the more abstract the film is, the more differences that are going to pop out. Then when the next audience comes in, it could be a whole different feeling, depending on the people there. It's always the person and the work, and you just don't know what goes on in people's heads and hearts when they see it.

You don't storyboard your films, do you?
Sometimes on certain sequences—if it's a big special effects thing. Everybody has to know exactly what's going on to build it and make it work. But the storyboard is mostly in the head.

I was interested to see that there were the very detailed drawings for *Eraserhead* that you did in 1970. They're not simple sketches.
We shot *Eraserhead* at night; it took a long time, and the lighting was very particular. So half of the time I would be drawing. I didn't have money for painting then, but I had time to draw. One time I drew this little woman and I liked her when I looked at her. My first thought was, "Oh, she lives in 'a' radiator." Then I started thinking more, and I realized that she lives in "the" radiator. And I went running into the set of Henry's room and looked at the radiator, which I had purchased from a studio that was going out of business. And this radiator was unique, I don't think I've ever seen one like it, and it had a perfect little place for this lady. That came out of a drawing I did while waiting for lighting and it led to a whole thing that absolutely had to be in the film. I always say something isn't finished until it's finished; ideas can come along during and even after you think the script is finished. So you stay on guard.

Boris Groys, the art critic, says that your painting allows you to run more risks than you do in film, that painting is really the dark art form. Is that a notion you subscribe to?
I don't know. You have a lot of freedom in both media. I started in painting and it led to film, and I have always said that it's totally ridiculous and a crime that a filmmaker doesn't have final cut. Because that's the way it is in painting. If you don't have that control, the film is not yours anymore and what happens is, you'll just die. You'll die.

You've talked about the magic of blackness and the idea of people coming out of the darkness, because when you're lost in the black, a different kind of story can emerge. Does it give you more freedom? It seems that the blackness is the place where freedom can best insinuate and manifest itself.
In a way, you're right. It's connected to this idea of the un-manifest and the manifest. I've been practising Transcendental Meditation for almost 45 years now, and Maharishi brought out tremendous life-saving, life-bettering knowledge. He says that infinite silence and infinite dynamism are together within all of us. This infinite silence is un-manifest, it's no thing, and yet it's hand in hand with infinite dynamism. And they're absolutely together in that field. So it's this unbelievable, powerful and almost electric balance. It's like the deep darkness and it's infinite; it's just silence and yet it holds this infinite dynamism. That's the way the darkness could be. And another thing is, in life, we're all sparks off the divine flame, and we've gone out into the void, into these different worlds, and gotten lost. So we're lost in darkness and confusion, like Henry Spencer in *Eraserhead*, and we have to find our way home. So coming out of darkness is a cosmic thing of finding your way home.

One thing that is also made manifest in your work is a repeated sense of menace.
And a fear of the unknown.

Is that because we're afraid of not knowing what it is, or is it terrifying because we know exactly what it is?
Could be both. The field within is all-positive, and you can't lose with that. Our home is infinite bliss and it's the most beautiful thing. But in the world in which we're lost, there are so many things that can get us—there are monsters and much negativity. But we have free will; we make choices. There's a law of nature: what you sow is what you reap. There's no escape. It's set. So anything we do to anyone else, we are in effect doing exactly the same thing to ourself. It's something to think about.

That's interesting because you have a watercolour done in 2011 called *My Shadow Is a Monster*. You realize that the duality is inside us; it's not outside of us.
Exactly. And when you transcend and experience that field within, you're expanding all those positive qualities of consciousness, and the side effect is to lift away that negativity. That monster inside is dissolving and all the impurities are lifting away. The beauty is it's like gold coming in and garbage going out.

In a work like *Do You Want to Know What I Really Think* from 2003, a man is standing in a room holding a knife and a woman has been asked to undress. And her answer to the eponymous question is, "No, I don't want to know what you really think," because she knows that it's not going to go well for her.
Exactly. There is so much stress in the world and we can only imagine the kind of domestic violence that goes on in houses across the land. That's what that painting is about.

It's interesting how often the word "house" appears, not just as a written sign, but you paint and draw houses a lot. Is that

a more personal expression of what "house" and "home" can mean, and how one can interpret both the darkness and the lightness within that particular domicile?
Absolutely. I love houses, I love the idea of inside and out. It's just as you said: it could be horror in there, or it could be really nice.

There's a lovely 1990 oil and mixed media called *Here I Am, Me as a House*, and in *Suddenly My House Became a Tree of Sores*, you return to the same subject. I gather that you want the house to be a vehicle that can express the range of our essential humanity on both the good and the bad sides. Is that how it works?
Yes. Suddenly my house became a tree of sores. You know, everybody's got this thing where everything changes because they find something in the house.

One of the other words that appears most often—and of course it comes up in your memoir, *Room to Dream*—is the idea of dreaming. Why has the dream played such a significant role in your visual art practice?
I have gotten ideas from dreams but not so many. They seem to come from being awake. But I do love dream logic. It's this thing that's so hard to say in words but you intuitively know it. Like, you know something in an instant in a dream and while it's completely known and completely real, it doesn't

Woman's Dream, 2013, oil and mixed media on canvas, 71 x 71 inches.

make any sense when you tell it to your friend the next day. You can say those kinds of things in the language of cinema, and you can also say certain things like that in painting.

Your characters have dreams that are pretty various. *Woman's Dream* (2013) involves a giraffe, whereas the *Fisherman's Dream* includes a steam iron. I just can't figure out ...
What the deal is? It has to do with what would feel good and what would conjure thoughts that couldn't happen in any other way. Sometimes I get a fixation on two things in one, so there would be one thing and it would be a certain way, and then I have to decide what would feel correct with that thing there. It turns out there are not that many things.

I keep thinking that your work operates out of what the surrealists would call "automatic composition," that the idea comes to you and then that idea begins to generate other possibilities.
It happens in all of them, in a way. They start one way and then through this process of action and reaction, they become a little bit different, sometimes very different.

You have a small watercolour—it's only 4 by 6 inches—called *Is It True?* And what we see is 2 + 2 = 4, and then the written title question. It makes me think that knowledge is something that has to be questioned, so that if one were to place you philosophically, your epistemology would be one of doubt, mistrust and constant questioning. Do you think that's fair?
Yes. I always say everybody is like a detective and there are clues in the world. We hear and see and feel things and then we start thinking about them as a detective. We ask ourselves, "Is that true? Does that make sense? Is this thing false?" That's why, in going through life, I think intuition is super-important. And to figure out what's true for you by seeing these clues and questioning the things inside.

So Kyle MacLachlan's character in *Blue Velvet* becomes an inadvertent detective who has to figure things out. As do many of your film characters.
Yes. It started, I guess, in *Eraserhead*, and they're all trying to figure something out.

Do the answers come as full answers or do they come as additional kinds of questions? I'm trying to get at the notion of what do we finally conclude out of the human enterprise. What can we come up with as an answer that's satisfying?
That's the thing. In detective novels very rarely is solving the crime satisfactory. You say, "Oh, okay, it was that." It's like learning a magic act; you learn what they do and it's a letdown. In the field of relativity you think many things are going to make you happy and give you that feeling of satisfaction, but in reality the only thing that is going to give you this fantastic feeling of completeness is gaining your full potential and enlightenment. And you unfold it by experiencing that infinite field within. It's all there and it is completely satisfying and euphoric. You just need to bring it out for yourself.

You said that one of the reasons why you took on directing *Dune* was because the character in the novel, Paul, is searching for a kind of enlightenment, and that his pursuit was one with which you could have some sympathy.
Yes, the sleeper must awaken.

The writer who comes to mind when we talk about the sleeper awakening is William Blake. In *Songs of Innocence and Experience* he has this notion that you go through experience, and out of it you come to a heightened innocence. It's not dialectical; it's a continuous process leading to knowledge.
I heard that he was probably enlightened. But with this thing of heightened awareness—if you put the word "infinite" in front of "awareness," that's infinite consciousness, that's infinite enlightenment. It's not just knowledge; it's knowledge and experience. Knowledge validates experience, and you start expanding consciousness; it leads to higher states and ultimately to the highest state, which is called "unity" consciousness, and you're home free. It might be a long way down the road, but with every step as you go towards light, things get brighter and better.

Have you become more enlightened as you've gotten older?
I don't know. I've become happier, and I really believe that the more you transcend through every day, life becomes more like a game than a torment.

You have remarked that contrast is what makes things work. Do you have to find a way to orchestrate that contrast in your painting or is it naturally there, which means making a work of art is simply following the contrast that is in the world rather than your using it as a compositional strategy to make a painting?
There's no strategy like that because it's not an intellectual thing. It comes with the idea and it's the idea that starts you, and then it's this process of action and reaction. This is the thing you hope to keep alive. And there's got to be a freedom to say, that didn't work, it's got to go. Then in the process of destruction, a beautiful new thing can emerge. It doesn't always emerge; sometimes you can be helped by accidents—it's a little bit like the random things the surrealists did. Those things are tools and I think they're super-important. Random things, random choices and then—bang, an idea comes.

The idea of randomness is complicated. Ginsberg said that mind is shapely, and what he was getting at was that the mind finds pattern and form, with the result that whatever we end up doing will finally assume some form, rather than formlessness.
I think that's absolutely right. Formlessness is in that transcendence. It's the ultimate abstraction. In the field of relativity everything has got a border; everything's got a form. There's nothing really formless except what's inside.

When you say "inside," I'm reminded that one of your constant visual tropes—it comes up a lot in the lithography—is the idea of the stage. You have fire on stage and an angel on stage. You actually present your small stories inside a proscenium frame. Was that a conscious device?

Absolutely. I just love the stage with curtains and a rectangle or a square. It's a defined space. When you run a film in some theatres, they have curtains on the side and an arch, and they're beautiful things that set a frame for your work.

The stage is the arena of the watcher and the watched. That's perfect Lynch territory, isn't it?
Yeah, yeah. It's like the audience is out there and then there's the thing happening on the stage. It's the same with cinema. Even though there are real people on the stage, it's different but the same.

One of the most beautiful of your lithographs is called *Angel on Stage*, in which this transcendent winged being lights up the darkened space. Why did you make that image?
I don't know. I got an idea to do it. But the beautiful news is, no matter how dark the night has been, as soon as the light comes, the darkness goes. Maharishi always said, don't fight the darkness—meaning negativity—don't even worry about it. Simply turn on the light. The light he's talking about is the light from that field within, the field of unbounded consciousness and creativity, happiness, love, energy, peace. You have it all.

This last response embodies the dilemma you present for viewers of your films and your visual art as well. It looks a lot like a dark world. Even the palette of your visual art tends to be a little bit on the dark side. But you're not like your work.
Right. It's really weird but in the newer work I've been working on white backgrounds. That seems to be where it's going.

Is there a hidden meaning emerging?
I don't think so; I just like it right now. I don't know if it means anything. I sometimes think, what if I suddenly turned it all dark? But it doesn't feel right. There's a bunch of things involved. I'm fascinated by the world and I love absurdity and a lot of things people do are really dark. It's unfortunate that people make bad choices and get into trouble. Looked at one way, it's absurd and even somewhat comical. But looked at another way, it's sad and horrible. So those things end up in painting or in cinema because they're in the world. But the artist doesn't have to suffer to show suffering. You can be very, very happy in your work and still show suffering. It becomes part of the story but it doesn't mean the whole film is dark. It means that something's going on. There could be very light things swimming in with the darkness and together they make a story.

I notice that your outdoor studio has a large reproduction of Bosch's *The Garden of Early Delights* pinned on a wall.
Yes, I pinned it up there. I went to see the actual painting, which has been restored, and it's unbelievably beautiful. And the packaging is unbelievable carpentry. It's built in a thing with hinges. No reproduction has ever done it justice.

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Big Sheep Did Eat My Brain, no date, work on paper, 8 x 8 inches.

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Man with Potato, 2015, mixed media painting, 24 x 24 inches.

You start doing photography around the time of *The Elephant Man* in 1980. What got you interested in the medium at that time?
I must have gotten some money because I always wanted to take pictures. I got a brand-new Canon camera just before I went to London for *The Elephant Man*. I've always loved cities and abandoned factories and railroad yards, and I've always loved nude women, and those are mainly what I've been photographing. What actual celluloid film does with those things is different from digital. You can still get the feel in digital, but black and white film is really beautiful for factories and nudes.

You're the only artist I know who's been able to combine the factory and the nude, which you did in a lithograph from 2007 called *Factory at Night with Nude*.
I like that one a lot. There are unreal textures in abandoned factories, where the most beautiful things are happening. It's like going to the best place.

One of the intriguing things about your nudes is that the viewer often doesn't know which part of the body is being looked at. Do you want that topographical confusion?
I don't want to confuse anybody, but I want parts of things, parts of factories. I don't like going wide and seeing the factory sitting there. I prefer to go in and get more details, and they turn into abstractions. And the female form is filled with possibilities for unreal abstractions.

You've said that you like to see life in extreme close-up. In a sense your photography has amplified that perceptual quest.
That really is true. These close-ups are the thing.

Where did the distorted nudes come from?
It was the first thing I ever did with Photoshop. I got hold of this book called *A Thousand Nudes*. They're anonymous photographs put together by a German man. I wrote to him and got permission to do a book. I would take those images, undo them and then put them back together in different ways; I loved distorting those pictures. I just went into heaven working on them.

When I saw them I thought of a range of photographers including Hans Bellmer, Pierre Molinier and even Joel-Peter Witkin.
Yes, I love Joel-Peter Witkin's work. To me, he's as much a painter as a photographer.

I'm interested in the way that scale and perception operate in your art. You have said that you don't want to be anywhere that was not your world, and that what you loved about doing *Eraserhead* was that it was a world "in your own little place where you could build everything and get it exactly the way you wanted for hardly any money—it just took time, it was just so beautiful, everything about it." Are you still creating your own world in circumscribed spaces that open up imaginatively?
Yes, if doing a painting is creating a world and if making a film is creating a world. The only difference is—and it's sad—money forces us to go more quickly in film. On *Eraserhead* I could live in that world and imagine all the things surrounding it because I lacked money. It was beautiful and really important to live in that world and let it seep into you and think about things that could lead to way more ideas for that world. It's gone now because of speed.

Nobody gives you that time anymore?
No way. It's impossible. The set goes up, you go in, you shoot. And then the next day the set's gone. It's sort of a horror. But for those moments it's totally real, you're in it, and you better enjoy it and feel it as deeply as you can, because it's not going to be there for very long.

In *Room to Dream* you make it clear that the size of the room you need to dream in isn't large. When you write about your childhood, you say your world wasn't bigger than a couple of blocks, but that there were huge worlds within those two blocks and everything you needed was there.
Exactly right. Some people love to travel to see the world. I like to stay at home and have the world mostly inside. The things around you can give you a feeling and you can conjure them, but most of the things are going on inside.

You have another lithograph called *A Lonely Figure Talks to Himself Softly*, and what he says to himself is, "Where are you going, you fucking idiot?" That's not you talking to yourself, is it?
Sure, sometimes. It's unfortunate when we're pretty lost and not really dealing with a full deck—because the full deck is enlightenment—we get confused and we sometimes make wrong choices. And it's difficult. I think everybody is a hero; in a strange way everybody is trying to find the answer, trying to do the right thing, and trying to fulfill their desires and make it be okay. It's just that a lot of negativity pushes in and causes people to make wrong choices. The prisons are full of people who did a wrong thing in a moment and then it's a long time in a tiny room.

In *The Air Is on Fire* catalogue, Andrei Ujica is trying to explain your accomplishments in so many media and he moves towards the idea of the Renaissance artist. His description of that rare figure is a being "who already carries a complete cosmological project within himself." That struck me as not being a bad way of talking about you and your various practices.
That's really nice but I don't know exactly what it means. To me, it's simple. There are ideas and each one is infinitely deep, and you can get a dialogue going with it and go deeper and deeper in all the different media. And each one is euphoric and a real thrill.

But don't you have to go deep inside the dark to find self?
In reality you need to transcend every day. That's the key to everything we're looking for. If you're doing that every day, then you're not afraid to go into these different worlds. You're catching ideas and realizing those things with as much freedom as you can possibly have. ∎

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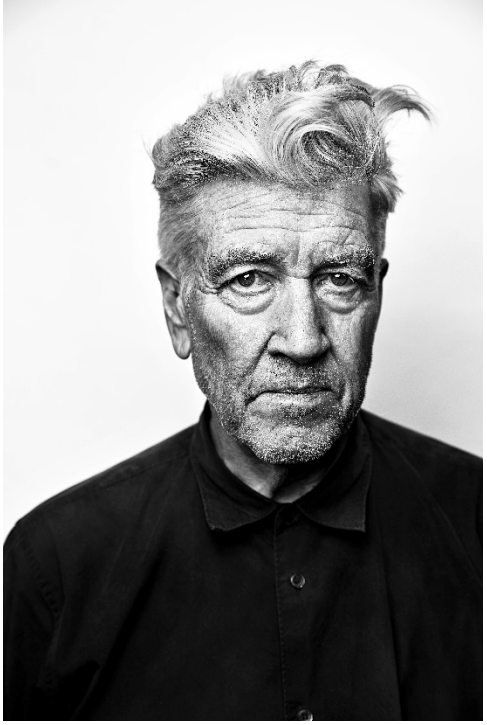

On the publication of his memoir, the artist talks about painting, film-making — and why meditation will save the world

The silver hair stands upright in a gravity-defying wedge. The suit is dark. The accent is a flat, aw-shucks American west twang that makes him sound a little like Ronald Reagan. Even sitting in a dimly lit room in a midtown Manhattan hotel, film-maker David Lynch is about as unmistakable as his work.

Lynch's subversive, twisty, maddeningly intricate 1990s series *Twin Peaks* upended the conventions of television. Now, with the publication of *Room to Dream*, he has sought to reinvent the celebrity memoir. Mirroring the concept of duality that peppers many of his projects, including *Twin Peaks* and *Mulholland Drive*, Lynch and his co-author, Kristine McKenna, devised a format in which they alternate chapters in an attempt to reveal truth amid layers of subjectivity. "She would interview people and tell their memories; then I would correct them because they were all wrong," says Lynch, who has the tendency to stare off in the distance, avoiding eye contact.

With reminiscences from family, childhood friends, wives and lovers, and Hollywood associates, the Lynch he and McKenna present is an idiosyncratic outsider. It's that same stance that has also earned him notice in the art world. In September Lynch will have a show of new paintings and prints at his Los Angeles gallery, Kayne Griffin Corcoran, followed in November by a retrospective of his boundary-ignoring practice at the Bonnefantenmuseum in Maastricht.

Stijn Huijts, director of the Bonnefanten, believes that Lynch's point of view is remarkably consistent across media. "It is always about the idea that there are more realities and dimensions of existence than just one," Huijts says. "Both in the films and in the other visual art of Lynch, the subconscious is an important well that feeds the creative process. The sphere of darkness and dread that is evoked by the films reoccurs in the art works."

That darkness is also in abundance in *Room to Dream*. Lynch, 72, shares one childhood memory of his father pulling over to the side of the road to chase a porcupine up a mountain, where he proceeded to shoot it. He explains that his father, whom he calls "loving and good", was a forestry scientist who hated porcupines because they kill trees. Another time, his father took a baseball bat to a closet of clothes in pursuit of a mouse. "He didn't have good aim," Lynch says with a smile. "He hit the clothes many times and finally the bloody mouse fell out. He really beat those clothes.

"The things that stick are interesting," he muses.

'Boy Lights Fire' (2010) by Lynch © Courtesy the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran

As the book makes clear, painting has always been primary to Lynch. "All I wanted to be was a painter, since the ninth grade," he says. "Painting led to film, but in between every film I'm painting."

When Lynch made his first film, in the late 1960s, he was studying painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia and was enamoured with the tortured expressionism of Francis Bacon. He'd never been a big movie buff; rather, he saw his initial stab at animation as a way of making a "moving painting". The inspiration — or hallucination — came late one evening in the studio: "I'm looking at this painting of a garden at night, mostly black, and it started to move. From the painting came a wind. There was sound and moving picture, and I said, 'Oh, a moving painting,' and that's what led to film for me."

The result was his 1967 piece, "Six Men Getting Sick", for which he shot a minute-long animation and projected it on to a screen sculpted with heads. Other short films followed, and by 1970 he had moved to Los Angeles to join the American Film Institute's first graduating class. At AFI he developed his quirky *Eraserhead*, which caught the attention of creative-minded producers, and soon his penchant for unorthodox material such as the empathy-inducing *The Elephant Man* and the nightmarish *Blue Velvet* gave him a reputation as an American auteur. In 1990 his *Wild at Heart* captured the Palme d'Or at Cannes.

Hollywood's demands have sometimes interrupted his painting for years on end, and Lynch admits that getting back into the groove is difficult. "It would be great if you didn't have to sleep," he laments. He

dreads the thought of being considered a Sunday painter or, worse, a celebrity one, although he deems such labels “total bullshit”.

Left: Nicolas Cage and Laura Dern in ‘Wild at Heart’ (1990) © Propaganda/PolyGram/Kobal/REX/Shutterstock. Right: Lynch on location shooting ‘Wild at Heart' © Acey Harper/The Life Images Collection/Getty Images

Huijts has made it a mission to recognise artists from what he terms the “secret canon” of compelling outsider artists, like Lynch. “The art world is very unjust when it comes to dealing with artists who have more than one talent,” he says, adding that he could easily envision some of last year’s rebooted *Twin Peaks* episodes holding their own at the Venice Biennale.

Like his movies, some of Lynch’s studio art has a Surrealist feel: a man floating in a room, a rock with eyes. “I may be in that neighbourhood,” Lynch says. But there’s also a blunt simplicity — an image of a black rotary telephone underneath the word “telephone”, a drawing of a flatbed truck hauling a log beneath the phrase “cloudy day” — that feels reminiscent of the cherry-pie-and-hot-coffee Americana glorified in *Twin Peaks*.

“I like a story in a painting and characters, and I like words in there,” he says. “I call it bad painting, but I like nature playing a part in the thing. I like totally mixed media. Getting this kind of organic thing — that’s what I love.”

Lynch often blurs the line between painting and sculpture by building out the canvases with three-dimensional elements. “I like to cut in, too,” he says. “Sometimes I put holes in the things.” A photographer and printmaker as well, he’s currently making lithographs in homage to Fellini’s seminal film *8½*.

As for which aspect of his life he prefers, Lynch describes the solitude of his studio as “beautiful”. Then again, he calls the camaraderie of a movie set “beautiful”. Just don’t dare suggest that film-making, with its scores of cast and crew, is a collaborative endeavour. “It’s not collaborative,” he barks. “It’s not. You have help. It’s not that you share ideas and decide which is best. I mean, it might be that way for some, I don’t know. You have ideas, and the ideas are what you stay true to. Everything has to pass through one person for it to hold together.”

His belief in the primacy of the individual aligns with his nearly 45-year practice of transcendental meditation. He has never missed one of his twice-daily sessions. Lynch even started a foundation to tout TM as a cure for the world’s ills. Take the epidemic of sexual assault and harassment that has been illuminated over the past year.

Lynch's 'Telephone' (undated) © Courtesy the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran

"You reap what you sow," he says. "There's all kinds of people going to be reaping bad things. But you can't make a law to make people act correctly or nicely. You can, and people will go to jail and stuff, but you can't change behaviour with the law. "[Only meditation] can really change collective consciousness and bring about a peaceful world," Lynch adds, before standing to depart. He is off to show his wife (his fourth) and five-year-old daughter (45 years younger than his eldest child) his grandparents' old house in Brooklyn.

To *Twin Peaks* fans who've read this far looking for a glimmer of hope that there's more to come, sorry to disappoint you. Lynch isn't sharing, just saying with a snarl, "I don't even want to talk about it."

'Room to Dream' is published by Random House/Canongate; David Lynch, Kayne Griffin Corcoran, September, kaynegriffincorcoran.com; 'David Lynch: Someone is in my House', November 30-April 28, bonnefanten.nl

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Martinez, Alanna. "Want to Understand 'Twin Peaks'? Look at David Lynch's Paintings First."
observer.com (Observer), 18 May 2017.

OBSERVER

David Lynch, *I Burn Pinecone*, 2009. Photo Robert Wedemeyer, Courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles

You probably know David Lynch from his films *Blue Velvet*, *Eraserhead* and *Mulholland Drive*, and the cult TV phenomenon he created called *Twin Peaks*, which is about to return after 25 years with all new episodes on May 21. But while Lynch may be famous for his incredible contributions to filmmaking, his art world beginnings and continued output have remained lesser known. Most recently, Lynch has been hard at work on rebooting *Twin Peaks* for Showtime under a cloak of secrecy, all the while releasing his own music and founding festivals for transcendental meditation. But he's still managed to find time to continue painting in the studio, a creative practice that has remained a constant endeavor since he attended Philadelphia's Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts as an art student in his youth, and where the seeds that eventually would become *Eraserhead* first sprouted.

In 2012, Lynch's New York gallery Tilton (helmed by the recently deceased venerable dealer Jack Tilton) mounted the director's first solo exhibition of fine art in the city since 1989. The show featured paintings, drawings, photographs and a series of multi-media works meticulously inlaid with colored lights, which featured cryptic text. The work *Boy's Night Out* depicts what appears to be a violent encounter between two characters, one holding a knife and gritting sharpened teeth splattered with blood (or simply

red paint, depending on your take) and the other holding a battery and clad in a blue garment embroidered with the words "daddy's home." The image, set against a deep black backdrop, is accompanied simply by the title, scrawled in lower case white letters. Sound like a scene from a Lynch film yet?

Bob's Second Dream, 2011. Courtesy the artist and Tilton Gallery, New York

Lynch fans lined up around the block on Manhattan's Upper East Side to attend the opening reception—as did I—for which the director was present, albeit briefly. And just as he is wont to do whenever he finds himself questioned about the significance of his films, he's been just as reticent to explain to media the significance of his art, however it is widely known that he's a big fan of Francis Bacon.

In a 2012 interview for Purple Magazine, artist Alex Israel asked Lynch if the figures in his paintings "that have very long arms also express longing, striving, and reaching?" Lynch replied: "Yeah. It's nice that you say that. There's a watercolor called *Man Reaching*, and some lithographs, *Reaching out for Nothing*, *Reaching Out*, and *Reaching*. I don't really think about things so precisely, but ideas come. Ideas are interesting to think about in terms of what makes them come along, and, in my case, in terms of what makes me fall in love with certain ideas and not others…."

Since his 2012 show at Tilton, Lynch's artworks have been shows at Kayne Griffin Corcoran in Los Angeles, his alma mater the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (which hosted his first U.S. museum retrospective) and the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane. And now, finally, thanks to a documentary from Jon Nguyen, Rick Barnes and Olivia Neergaard-Holm called *David Lynch: The Art Life*, the director's studio practice has made its big screen debut. But don't expect the intimate screen time with Lynch in his

studio to shed much more light on the themes in artwork or his movies. “I think every time you do something like a painting, or whatever, you go with ideas,” Lynch says in the film’s voiceover, according to Vogue. “And sometimes the past can conjure those ideas, and color those ideas. Even if they’re new ideas, the past colors them.”

Boy Lights Fire, 2011. Courtesy the artist and Tilton Gallery, New York

Lynch may yet provide the academic explanation for his imagery that his fans so desperately crave, and he certainly won’t tell you if his drawings contain *Twin Peaks* spoilers (you’ll have to look closely yourself) but one thing is clear: he remains as devoted as ever to making art, and he’s a master at any medium he chooses.

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Michno, Christopher. "The Primitive, Expressive Figurations Of David Lynch." *www.riotmaterial.com (Riot Material)*, 14 February 2017.

RIOT MATERIAL

ART. WORD. THOUGHT.

Left to right: *Who Is In My House; Man Eating With Two Hands; Thinking of Things; Airplane*

Left to right: *I Want to Understand; House and Garden; Pain Comes Out; This is How*

At this year's Art Los Angeles Contemporary, the international contemporary art fair of the West Coast, the Los Angeles gallery Kayne Griffin Corcoran devoted its booth to a display of 46 works on paper and two mixed media sculptures by David Lynch. The four day affair, running January 26-29, 2017, offered a dense sampling of the 70 year old artist's drawings and watercolors, the majority of which were dated from 2008 through 2014. Though most of these works have been previously exhibited, it was a welcome reprise, and Lynch's works on paper addressed threads that also repeatedly emerge in the auteur's better known film oeuvre—the desire to probe the unconscious mind, the sense of the uncanny, the need to stare directly into the murky depths of humanity's darkness. But as is the nature of small works on paper, they are quieter than his film work, and more reflective.

Yet the work emphatically creates a phantasmagoric, dream-like space. Indeed, Lynch has at various times been critically associated with the Surrealist movement, most decisively in 2009 for "David Lynch—Dark Splendor" at the Max Ernst Museum; although, not in a literal sense, but more as a successor informed by the spirit of that pre-War movement.

Before venturing into film, Lynch started as a visual artist, and his myth of origin as a filmmaker involves a moment when he was studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art in the 1960s. While working on a painting, he experienced a fleeting sensation, which he later described as hearing a slight wind and seeing movement in the figure on the canvas; the apparitional breeze that blew through his studio compelled him to begin making moving pictures, and in a sense, his painting, drawing and sculpture practices are inextricably linked with his film work.

Eraserhead (1977), his first feature film, is, of all his films, most closely of-a-kind with the works on paper exhibited at Art LA Contemporary in spite of being separated by more than 30 years. The black and white of the film and the powerful sensation of dream-space reverberate in the predominantly monochromatic

works. Most of these works include text with primitive, expressive figuration, conveying an intense emotional theater and human drama.

Many of the texts within the drawings elaborate on or enlarge our understanding of the scope of the drawing itself. *Going To Visit Ur House* (2008-09) depicts a figure trudging over a small rise on his way to a schematically drawn house slightly down-slope. The outline of both figure and house appear to be made with granules of salt in a kind of relief of the translucent crystalline structure. The figure holds what is unmistakably a rifle. An enlarged head, mouth wide with rage, appears above as if a projection of the figure's psychic energy. A small black cloud sits in the sky hovering over the drawing's text, and in an emphatic gesture, an arrow points to "ur" house in this murderous tableau.

All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth

In other drawings, the texts seem unrelated to the figuration and serve to confound any sense of a comprehensive, rational whole in which the work can be summarized, with Lynch preferring to resist any kind of totalizing critical read of his work, and instead allowing contradictory threads to play out in the piece. In the watercolor *All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth* (2012), the predominantly ochre foreground contains a complex set of spatial relationships indicated by the relative sizes of the figures and objects drawn in simple black contour. A truck occupying the left side of the picture seems to be off in the distance. The beams issuing from the headlamps, traced in broken lines, illuminate what we come to realize is a night scene. Two figures, a man and a woman, appear to be locked in a struggle, or they may possibly be perpetrator and victim—the exact nature of their interaction is ambiguous. The woman's left leg appears curiously hooked behind the back of the man's corresponding leg, and she appears to be either falling or

Going to Visit Ur House

Dog

Sally's in the Kitchen

supine on the ground with her mouth a blackened hole. This kind of representation of a mouth as a shapeless, blurry-edged void is a recurring motif in Lynch's depictions of his subjects. It is difficult to read this any other way than as an expression of abject horror. A house stands on a small rise beyond the figures and truck, forming an implied triangular. And in the foreground, positioned in the space above the interlocked pair, a blackened apparition hovers. Its sharpened, beak-like terminus angles down toward the man's arm, and the mass of it extends into the gray cast of the sky, a coarse, feathered-looking tail spread upward, with a white dorsal wing-like appendage jutting out above the corpus of darkness. To the right of the figures the hand written text, with some letters randomly capitalized the way a child might, reads, "all I Want foR christmas is my two fRont teeth." Whether the black mass is some kind of dark psychic projection or angel of death, the scene conjures a real sense of terror.

Another watercolor in the same ochre, black and gray tonal range, *Sally's in the Kitchen* (2013), likewise presents heterogeneous narrative elements in a nightmare scenario, but its use of text fits somewhere between confounding and enlightening. A circa 1940s bomber delivers a payload; while in the foreground, an explosion bursts from the hood of a car. The man next to the car is thrown back by the blast, his hand flung wide. The text suggests that in his final moment he shouts to someone outside of the picture frame, "SaLLy's IN the Kitchen!!"

In yet other drawings, Lynch's text names the objects he is depicting, for example, *Dog* (2012), yet even this simple procedure, that is, naming an object, takes on a perplexity as our understanding of the thing is confounded by Lynch's vision.

Two lamps at the Kayne Griffin Corcoran booth represented Lynch's sculptural production. The first, *Douglas Fir Top Lamp #1* (2002) is loosely figurative, with slits machined from the front facing panel that give the lamp a human-like visage. The second, *Gray Amber Lamp* (2011) suggests a vaguely industrial/humanoid hybrid, or a kind of rendering of human function for industrial production. Like a vat, the amber rectangular prism sits atop a metalwork stand; it is attached to an intestinally-shaped metal tube that traces its way to the lamp's base. These works convey a loosely idiosyncratic design, and they would not be out of place in design showroom. They communicate Lynch's preoccupations with the uncanny, but they do not come close to imparting the naked energy invested in his drawings and watercolors.

Douglas Fir Top Lamp #1

Gray Amber Lamp

Lynch has described in interviews the process by which he arrives at his ideas, saying that thoughts simply come to him, as if alighting from some unknown source. It is not dissimilar to André Breton's description in the Surrealist Manifesto of automatic writing as a way to express the very functioning of thought. But instead of a strict adherence to the tenants of Surrealism, Lynch's work suggests an attention to the whimsical nature of thought itself as it sparks and then evaporates in individual consciousness. More than that, it reveals his willingness to follow unflinchingly the darkest threads to their conclusions, thus illuminating the darkest possibilities in the human condition.

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Lim, Dennis. "On Site: David Lynch in Philadelphia." *www.artforum.com (Artforum)*, January 2015.

ARTFORUM

David Lynch, *Six Men Getting Sick* (detail), 1967, fiberglass, resin, acrylic, and graphite on Masonite panel, 16-mm projection (color, sound, 60 seconds).

PHILADELPHIA LOOMS LARGE in the personal mythology of David Lynch as a place that both terrorized him and changed the course of his life, his Gomorrah and his Rubicon in one. A product of small-town America, Lynch credits this onetime epicenter of urban blight with instilling in him a fear and disgust so extreme it opened a mental pathway to "another world." He transfigured the city's postindustrial dereliction into the infernal wasteland of his first feature film, *Eraserhead* (1977), and the dying gasps of its manufacturing age—clanking gears, droning machines, venting steam—indelibly shaped his aesthetic vocabulary. It was art school that brought Lynch to Philly in 1966, and it was in his studio at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts where he experienced an epiphany that, in the familiar telling, moved him away from painting. The story appears in his memoir-*cum*-self-help-guide, *Catching the Big Fish*(2006). He was at work on a painting of plants in a garden when he sensed a wind emanating from within the canvas, seeming to stir the leaves under his brush. *What if paintings could move?* he wondered. *What if they had sound?* The rest is cinema history.

Yet Lynch never stopped painting after this mythical shift from still to moving images. His first US museum retrospective, on view at his old student stomping grounds, consists of almost one hundred paintings, drawings, and lithographs, more than half of them produced since the completion of *Inland Empire* (2006), which initiated his longest hiatus yet from directing (set to end with the imminent return of *Twin Peaks* in 2016). As its title suggests, "The Unified Field," organized by Robert Cozzolino, the academy's senior curator, seeks to resituate Lynch as an artist who happens to make films—as opposed to a filmmaker who dabbles in painting. The show's implicit argument is for a congruence of vision and a shared set of themes and methods in Lynch's work across multiple mediums, throughout his life. ("The unified field" is a significant phrase not just in particle physics but also in Transcendental Meditation [TM], which Lynch has ardently promoted in recent years, where it refers to an unbounded realm of consciousness that unites all living things.)

Lynch's visual art is typically discussed in two ways: as a valuable skeleton key to his better-known work (hence the oft-repeated notion that he makes "painter's films") or as little more than a hobby, the latter in an attempt to assert that he chose the right vocation. "The Unified Field" does its part to counter the second tendency by complicating the first truism. The earliest works here—drawings and paintings of interspecies creatures and man-machine hybrids from the mid-1960s—contain the first glimpses of Lynch as a figurative artist for whom the body is both a site for transformation and a zone of alienation. Most depict biomorphic fantasies in which deformity and prosthesis are emphasized, with internal organs visible and biology rendered as machinery, a system of orifices and tubes.

Throughout the show, there are points of contact—both correlations and contradictions—with Lynch's biography and filmography. The mutant genus spawned in *Eraserhead*'s traumatic birth appears several times; a whole clan of its members can be seen in *Family*, 1974, a pencil drawing of a living-room scene that foreshadows the rabbit sitcom in *Inland Empire.* Around the time Lynch discovered TM in the '70s, spiritual motifs emerged, for example in *Crucifixion*, 1973, an ornate ballpoint rendering, and in symmetrical geometric compositions with Renaissance arches, rainbow spectrums, golden beams, and titles such as *Infusing the Being* and *Third Ray* (both watercolors from 1974).

But the Lynchian ideal of art as immersion in and pipeline to the unconscious produces notably different effects in his moving-image work and in his studio art; the latter even at its most haunting leaves less to the imagination. If Lynch's richest narrative films, especially from *Blue Velvet* (1986) on, have confounded the categories of irony and sincerity, twisting them into strange new affective registers, his paintings of the last two decades aspire simply to the willful naïveté of *art brut*. Encrusted with rough, heavy impasto, many of these large canvases—which Lynch in some cases painted with his bare hands—depict a violent action (often pyromaniacal or sexual) against a field of primordial muck, from which stray objects (a chicken foot, an undulating curtain) occasionally protrude. Lynch's mistrust of words means that his films often resist the expository function and realist tenor of dialogue, relying instead on intricate sound design to evoke what lies beyond language. In his paintings, and especially in the recent black-and-white lithographs, there is a perverse preponderance of text: a compulsion to name, label, and caption that, in heightening their absurdity, strips words of their power.

It's only fitting that the highlight of "The Unified Field" is the restaging of a work that reflects Lynch's dawning awareness of medium-specificity: the installation *Six Men Getting Sick*, 1967. Made in direct response to his moving-painting moment of truth, this piece was an attempt to bring the canvas to life by combining it with a film projection. In keeping with his undisguised reverence for Francis Bacon, the first action that Lynch depicted on celluloid is a spasm. Accompanied by a blaring siren and projected onto a screen with three sculpted heads in its top-left corner, this minute-long stop-motion animated loop depicts

a row of figures in agony, their digestive tracts overflowing in a collective retch that floods the image with vomit in the form of streaked white paint. But their upheaval brings no relief; the cycle starts again immediately. Lynch would strive for precisely this no-exit effect in the passages of suspended trancelike intensity that periodically take over his movies. The punch line here, as in so many of his films, is that the ending is also a beginning.

Dennis Lim is director of programming at the Film Society of Lincoln Center in New York.

"The Unified Field" is on view at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, through Jan. 11.

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Bors, Chris. "Critics' Picks: David Lynch." *www.artforum.com (Artforum)*, 29 December 2014.

ARTFORUM

David Lynch, *Woman with Screaming Head*, 1968, acrylic on canvas, 66 x 60".

David Lynch
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Museum
118-128 North Broad Street
September 13, 2014–January 11, 2015

For a generation of David Lynch devotees that know him as the filmmaker of foreboding, surreal films such as *Eraserhead* and *Blue Velvet*, and of the cult television series *Twin Peaks*, it may come as a revelation that he has been making paintings since the 1960s. Since the outré is inherent in his widely known medium, it is of no surprise that his visual art follows suit, with many examples straddling the line between neo-expressionism and *art brut*. The unsettling Francis Bacon–esque *Man Throwing Up*, 1967, is quite restrained formally despite its subject matter, featuring a three-dimensional visage spewing a noxious yellow-and-white matter. More recent mixed-media conglomerations, including the oversize *I Burn Pinecone and Throw in Your House*, 2009, of a crudely rendered man holding a lit match amid a highly built-up surface, lack a palpable sense of unease, due to their cartoonish quality. More forbidding is *Shadow of a Twisted Hand Across My House*, 1998, whose heavy gray brushstrokes transform the everyday into something sinister, exploring childhood fears by channeling a time when one's imagination was unbounded.

The hybrid installation *Six Men Getting Sick*, 1967, a student work that is a precursor to Lynch's fully developed oeuvre, integrates film and animation with painting and sculpture to create a nightmarish scenario of group regurgitation. His early short films, such as *The Grandmother*, 1970, in which a young boy abused by his parents creates a doting grandmother from a vulval root that he grows from a seed, show the formation of a highly focused and intense creative artist who reveled in examining the disturbing and sinister aspects of life from the outset of his career.

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Moonie, Stephen. "The twin careers of David Lynch: We visit the director's art exhibition in Middlesbrough." *www.bbc.co.uk (BBC)*, 15 December 2014.

Image © David Lynch | *Telephone* (detail), undated | Courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles | Photography: Brian Forrest

As his admirers eagerly await new episodes of his cult 1990 TV series *Twin Peaks*, David Lynch - the director best known for films such as *Blue Velvet*, *Eraserhead*, the *Elephant Man* and *Mulholland Drive* - opens the first major exhibition of his work in the UK.

Lynch, who was a painter before he was a filmmaker, entitles his Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art show *Naming* to highlight the ambiguous nature of naming his paintings, drawings, watercolours, photographs and films. Dr. Stephen Moonie, Lecturer in Art History at Newcastle University, enters Lynch's universe.

This exhibition, which includes watercolours, prints and photographs spanning David Lynch's career from 1968 to the present, provides the first opportunity to view his artwork in the UK. Lynch does not want to be seen as a 'celebrity painter'. Unlike the ageing rock stars who turn their hand to the occasional daubing, Lynch has always been a visual artist in his own right.

He made art before his first films in the late 1960s. However, despite the long-standing connection between Lynch's art and his film, his art is stylistically different, and merits being seen on its own terms.

It might come as a surprise to some viewers – especially devotees of his film and TV work – to find that much of Lynch's work has a deliberately naïve style, although this is not without the odd touch of whimsy or the macabre for which he is renowned.

This stylistic difference is especially apparent in the prints and watercolours, which allow him to explore the different visual possibilities offered by mark-making. The work on display is small-scale, requiring the close scrutiny of the viewer.

His watercolours, such as *Far Close* (undated), initially seem accidental. Dark washes of pigment float the surface and bleed at the edges, while the scrawled lettering wanders awkwardly across the surface. Closer inspection, however, reveals that this seemingly accidental treatment is in fact quite scrupulous.

Far Close contains a carefully arranged circular perforation. Although the surface initially seems opaque, the tiny hole invites the viewer to peer into the beyond as if through a telescope. The work plays with the idea that a painting is both a flat surface, and a window onto the world.

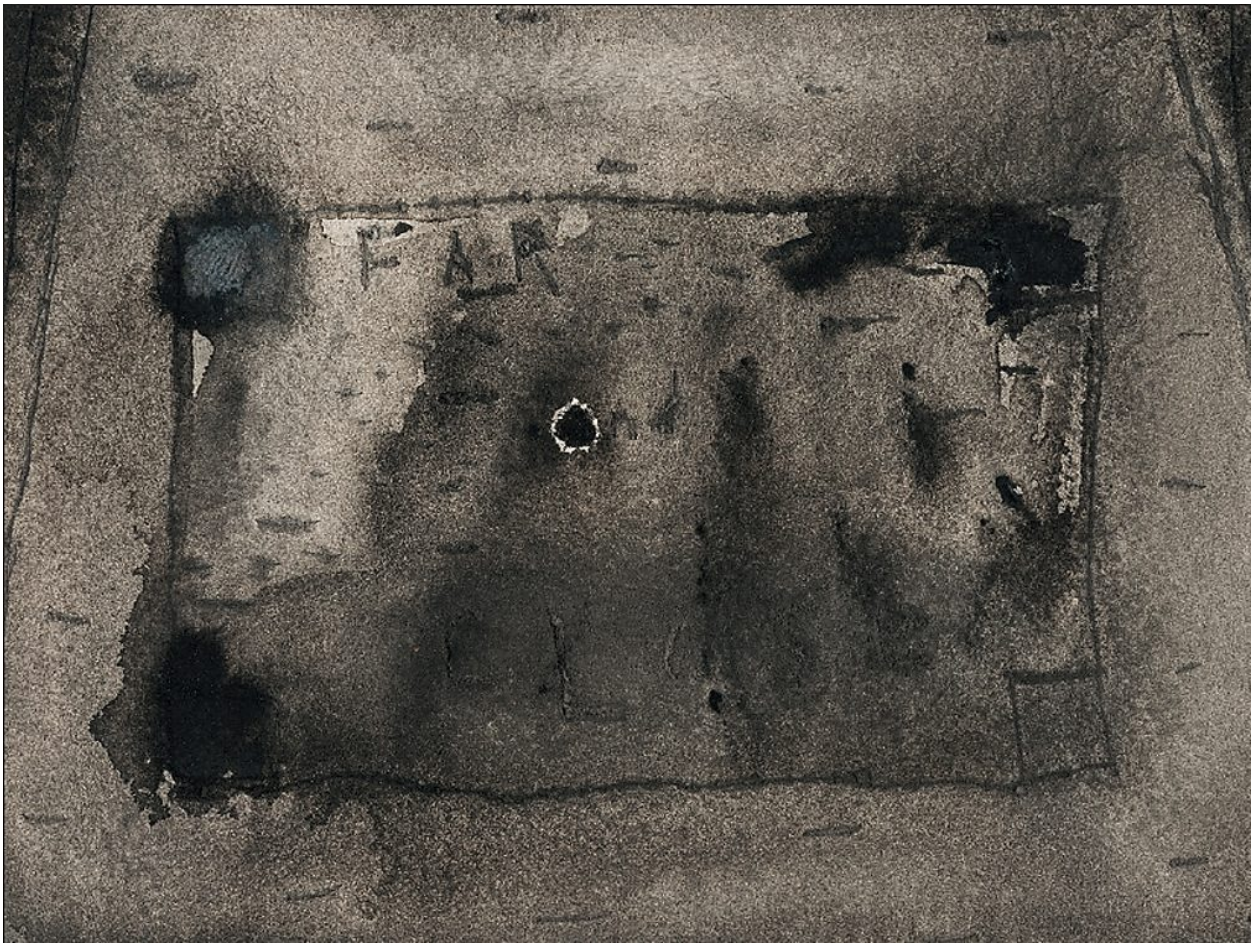

Image © David Lynch, *Far Close*, undated | Courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles | Photography: Brian Forrest

The words scrawled into the surfaces are the central theme of the exhibition: 'naming'. It attempts to explore the relationship between words and things: a relationship which is never as simple as it seems.

The first exhibit is a disturbing film entitled *The Alphabet* (1968), which was based upon an account by Lynch's wife of her niece having a nightmare. The animation seems more closely related to the exploration of repressed fears, desires and anxieties which Lynch would explore in film and TV.

However, it stands out from the rest of the exhibition, where the works fall largely into two categories: the quirky, playful watercolours and prints, and a series of immaculate, deadpan photographs of the urban landscape.

Lynch's prints emphasise the fact that they are handmade. Drawn with a thick, heavy line which is elegantly smudged, the images play not only with words but with visual imagery.

Dog (2012) shows a Surrealist influence: it is a single shape which is made up of a composite of different forms: these could be crossed limbs, an animal head, and what looks like a hockey stick with the legend 'dog did bite' running up its side.

Equally whimsical is the watercolour *TV BBQ* (2009) which depicts an old TV set and a barbeque side by side. Lynch smudges each object, bringing out the similarity between the two: propped up by spindly legs, the appliances resemble a pair of hovering insects, or even a pair of B-movie spaceships touching down.

His prints and watercolours demonstrate the influence of Surrealism in their suggestive, naïve style. However, Lynch's photographs of Los Angeles and New Jersey exhibit a deadpan 'coolness' characteristic of Pop and Conceptual Art in the 1960s.

In the series *Untitled* (Industrial, New Jersey c.1986), one particular photograph captures a wall-mounted telephone beneath a copper plaque. Viewed from our era of smartphones, it appears to be a strange-looking object. Other photographs depict side-streets, warehouses, bars and pool halls.

Human beings are absent from all of these photographs, but each one contains words or letters, which are often slyly humorous. Another photograph from the New Jersey series shows a nondescript bar in an industrial suburb.

A puddle of rainwater gathers at the entrance, while in the background, the front end of a car bonnet juts out awkwardly. A hastily written sign in the window invites us to try 'Ted's Meatball Hero - $1.75.'

Another photograph shows a different bar with a drab façade. The lettering in the window, 'Monroe Buddies', conjures up glamour and beauty, or perhaps just sociable company, but this contrasts starkly with the deserted façade.

Image © David Lynch, *Dog*, 2012 | Courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles. Photography: Brian Forrest

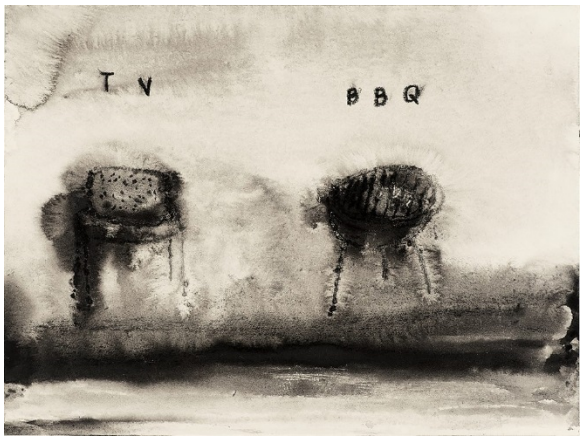

Image © David Lynch, *TV BBQ*, 2009 | Courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles | Photography: Brian Forrest

Other photographs capture a more cinematic grandeur: the fence guarding a New Jersey power plant creates a dramatic diagonal of criss-crossing barbed wire and power lines. Likewise, *Untitled (Los Angeles)* (1979) looks up at the shop sign 'Thrifty'.

The pharmacy logo is set dramatically against the sky as if it were a heroic icon. The image is reminiscent of other photographs of LA by Ed Ruscha and Dennis Hopper. Like those artists, Lynch's deadpan style leaves the viewer guessing as to his feelings about the subject matter.

Although the exhibition will undoubtedly attract fans of Lynch, the works stand on their own two feet. They show that Lynch is an artist engaged with many aspects of art in the post-war United States: the urban environment, the strangeness of language, and the legacy of Surrealism.

David Lynch Naming is at the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art until 26 March 2015.

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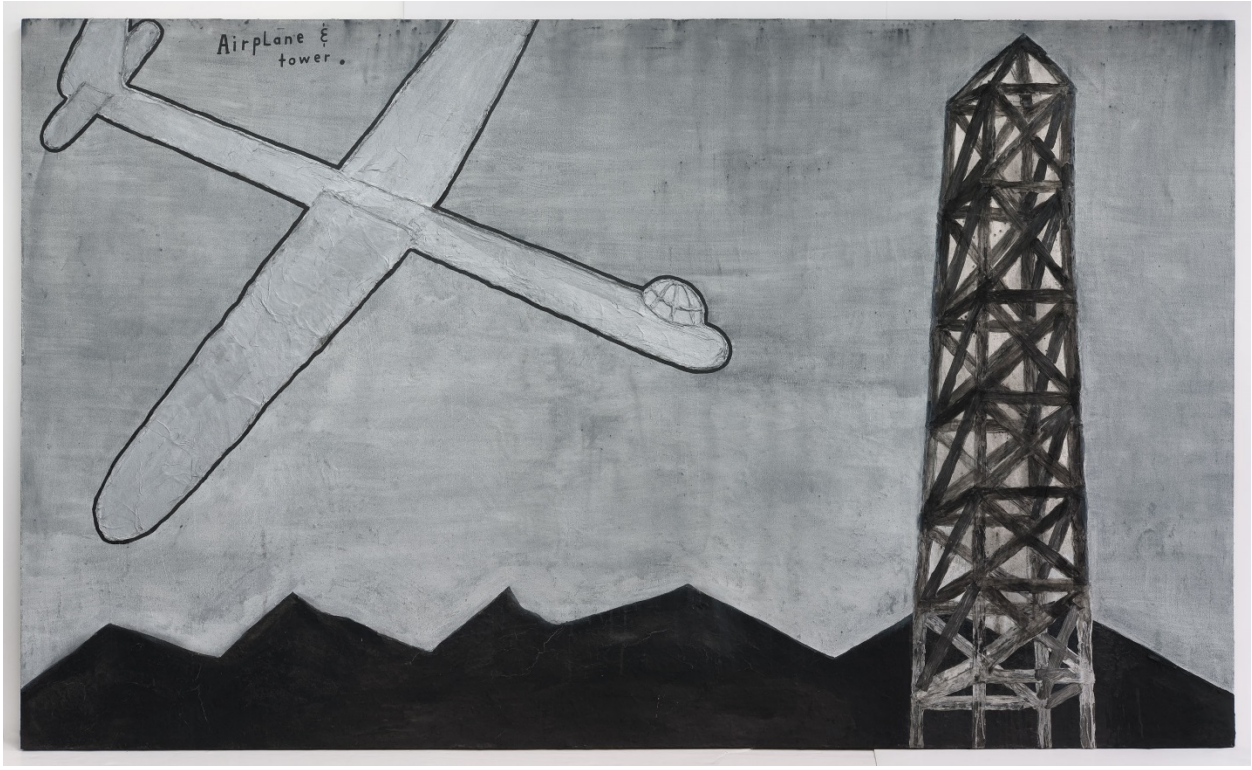
Bodey, Michael. "David Lynch, Twin Peaks creator, brings paintings to Brisbane's GOMA."
www.theaustralian.com.au (The Australian), 14 November 2014.

THE AUSTRALIAN



Airplane Tower (2013) by David Lynch. Source: Supplied.

The story seems familiar. An individual, a one-time phenomenon in one field, pulls back from the spotlight to concentrate on their true love: painting. Filmmaker David Lynch, however, is no peripatetic painter. He's an art school graduate, and as a child he dreamed of a life of painting but thought it an unachievable folly. That was until a mentor showed him it could be otherwise.

Lynch was a promising young artist before moving to the screen in such an indelible fashion, creating off-kilter films and the seminal television series *Twin Peaks*, which will return next year reimagined 25 years after the crime.

And while the world in 2015 will be waiting to see what exactly the auteur does with that famous series, Lynch will have his artistic focus set, at least briefly, on Australia.

In March, Lynch will make his first visit to these shores when Brisbane's Gallery of Modern Art presents one of the largest surveys of his work, a retrospective of the American's paintings, sculptures and films.

The exclusive show of some 200 works, entitled *David Lynch: Between Two Worlds* and curated by QAGOMA's Jose Da Silva, continues a late-career renaissance for a man better known for the breathtaking and singularly distinct cinema and television style that marked the 1980s and 90s, beginning with *Eraserhead* in 1977 through to *Mulholland Drive* 24 years later.

Lynch agrees it "sort of is" a renaissance for him, at least as an artist. He has been busy noodling away in his sprawling Los Angeles Hills compound for years; it's just we haven't seen many of the fruits of that labour.

"I've been painting all through the years and all I ever really wanted to do in the beginning was be a painter," he says. "So I kept painting but I never showed too much."

He describes his irregular gallery exhibitions through the years — in his hometown Los Angeles; another in New York in 1987 on the recommendation of his then girlfriend and *Blue Velvet* star Isabella Rossellini; and others in Japan — as "hit and miss".

But in 2007, the Paris museum Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain presented the first comprehensive exhibition of Lynch's art. That exhibition travelled to Milan, Moscow and Copenhagen. "And that started the ball rolling again," Lynch says.

Last month, his first American museum retrospective, *David Lynch: The Unified Field*, opened at the Pennsylvania Academy, his former art school. The new QAGOMA exhibition will be a distinct, and larger, offering.

Importantly, the exhibitions are "art shows" rather than cinematic retrospectives (although QAGOMA will screen a retrospective of his film, television and video works at its Cinematheque). To be sure, through his peak years of *The Elephant Man* (1980), *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Wild at Heart* (1990), and *Twin Peaks* (1990-91), Lynch influenced more than just cinema. His hallucinatory narratives and visuals informed a multitude of storytellers and took hold of the public to the point at which it seemed we were all ponderering who killed Laura Palmer.

His artworks give a clear view of where that all came from while being their own distinct achievement in his career.

Da Silva says Lynch is not a token painter and sculptor.

"Even on a basic visual level, you understand how the same person is making these films and making this work," he says. "Unlike some filmmakers who dabble in other media, his work across other media has been central to his ideas about his broader cinematic work."

Indeed, arguably Lynch's most striking film work, the 1967 experimental short *Six Men Getting Sick*, is the apotheosis of his painting morphing into film.

The work was a large-scale resin screen, featuring three protruding impressions of his own head, on to which he projected a one-minute, handpainted loop animating six heads in various stages of distress. The three faces distort, a siren wails and the men's stomachs fill with fluid that rushes to their mouths.

The art school experimental work elevated his career out of the grime of Philadelphia, the city that so influenced his work. It saw Lynch step off the canvas and into another realm as he explored his notion of the "moving painting".

Moving to film then was the logical artistic step. “Exactly,” he says of the work that was as much a film as a sculpture or painting. “You know the reason I made that first film, it was a thing that came out of wanting a painting that would move.

“That’s the way I sort of saw cinema, especially in the short films time (of my career). I didn’t know anything about cinema but I sort of saw it as painting with sound and a story, and it was very abstract to me. It was an extension of painting.”

The notion of a “moving painting” is intriguing. It is one way of approaching the ideal of pure cinema yet, counterintuitively, modern cinema often eschews the possibilities of the visual. Composition is ignored in favour of kinetic energy and stories are told via dialogue, not imagery.

Lynch notes dialogue can “be like music” and remains important. “But, for instance, *Eraserhead* hardly had any dialogue and you know, it is a combination of all those things: dialogue, pictures, sound effects, mood and lighting,” he says. “But it was born out of wanting a painting to move.”

Lynch painted as a child when his family moved between four towns for his father’s jobs as an agriculture department researcher before they ended up in Alexandria, Virginia, where, at the age of 14, he came under the wing of a friend of his father. Artist Bushnell Keeler showed the teenaged Lynch it was perfectly reasonable for adults to paint as a profession.

“A bomb went off in my head,” Lynch recalls. “It was in the back of my mind that (painting) was very nice to do but it wasn’t something I could do when I grew up. Absolutely in that one moment (I was) transfixed and transformed and I thought: ‘That’s all I want to do.’ I got permission from the dialogue from that encounter and that was it.”

Painting, whether his broader cinematic audience knew it or not, has “stuck with me like tar” ever since. The ambitions of children can be far-fetched, yet Lynch’s as a young teen ultimately defined him. “Oh yeah,” he says. “I wanted to live what I called the art life. And it was totally thrilling to me, so that was it.”

Now 68, the late recognition could be discombobulating. Yet Lynch appears broadly comfortable with his output and the process by which he came to make his art, even if he still hasn’t found what he’s looking for. And he doesn’t believe film diverted him from the career he wanted. “People do many different things and I love the cinema but, like I said, I kept on painting and I got into still photography through cinema. So you know many different things can go on.”

Da Silva says those many things — painting, photography, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, sound design, music and film — combine for an artistic blockbuster featuring more than 200 works that offers a point of difference from recent cinematic retrospectives.

“In my mind, for a living filmmaker, it’s a rare exception having this level of extraordinary depth,” Da Silva says.

The curator aims to pivot the exhibition on themes central to Lynch’s work, including man and machine and the extraordinary, rather than offering a chronological retrospective.

“It’s not about how one thing led to another but these are artistic concerns that have been concurrent throughout his career,” Da Silva says.

Lynch hesitates when asked whether he agrees there is a cohesive line through his work.

"Well, yes and no," he says. He likes his early output from the 1960s, and sees some commonalities "but it's changed at the same time".

He cites Francis Bacon and installation artist Edward Kienholz as the artists he admires most, which itself suggests Lynch is influenced by a broad palette.

Presumably his art has advanced by his having becoming more adept technically?

"No, no, I've become less adept," he corrects quickly. "And I like bad painting. I like organic phenomenon and I like nature to help me with some painting."

He explains his penchant for throwing different things into his paintings, building up surfaces and cutting holes in what he dubs a kind of "bad, childish painting". "I haven't ever really been satisfied yet but I keep trying to go for something I don't know exactly what it is," Lynch adds.

"But it has to do with organic things and certain proportions. I like figures. I like absurdities. I like to burn things. I like glue. I like mistakes. I like destruction, wire. I like cardboard. I like … different things going on in there but I haven't got the thing I'm looking for yet."

His work also has periods of monochromatic intensity. Lynch concedes he went through a stage where he "hated colour" and painted just black or white or earth colours. But at one point even brighter earth colours "started making me sick". "I'm not really against colour if it works," he says. "But for a long time it just didn't work."

His time in Philadelphia contributed to that darker period. He dropped out of Boston's School of the Museum of Fine Arts in 1964 and moved to the Pennsylvania academy in 1966.

Lynch says the latter city has been the greatest influence on his work. *Eraserhead*, the surrealist horror film starring Jack Nance, emerged from that time, when his "kind of love of factories and fire and smoke and soot and mood and certain type of feeling was ingrained in me".

"I had a love-hate relationship with the city but looking back I'm so thankful I was there."

The new-found appreciation of Lynch's art — and confirmation of his return with Mark Frost to television with *Twin Peaks* for the US broadcaster Showtime — follow a fallow period during the 2000s. Publicly, he was off the radar. Privately, he was as industrious as ever. Lynch predated many with his ambitious digital distribution channel davidlynch.com in the early 2000s, with its online short films and a sitcom about humanoid rabbits.

Yet he appeared to have burrowed down his own rabbit warren with the release of 2002's *Inland Empire*, the unstructured film shot during the course of two years. Then there was his bizarre promotion of the three-hour film, which included promoting Laura Dern's Oscar prospects by sitting on Sunset Boulevard with a cow and a banner reading "WITHOUT CHEESE THERE WOULDN'T BE AN INLAND EMPIRE."

An understanding reading of that event would be that Lynch has the confidence to express any idea he develops. Clearly his ego overcame fear long ago. And what once might have been considered his

unconventional artistic choices have been adopted as mainstream. For instance, could the recent US series *True Detective* have existed without *Twin Peaks*?

Lynch reveals his one true love is "catching ideas". "A lot of times I just sit and daydream and look at a painting in progress and think about it and run different scenarios in my mind until something catches," he says.

Then he experiments "and more often than not it's making something that's so bad that you get to destroy it and many times out of this destruction comes something that is a surprise and leads to the next thing."

Lynch has been a vocal exponent of transcendental meditation for 41 years and believes it has been "the biggest facilitator for happiness and more and more the ability to catch ideas that are thrilling". " I use that as the No 1 tool for creativity," he says.

Meditation has benefited his "bigger picture of life, feeling good in the body, looking forward to the day and more and more energy".

He believes it starts "expanding his consciousness". "We don't know an idea until it enters the conscious mind," he says. "So if you can make the conscious mind bigger … you can catch the ideas on a deeper level; they've got more information, more thrill, they come with so much more and then you're rolling.

"It's still a mystery how they come along. I get lots and lots of ideas but those ones that I really need I say are like gifts and they're a blessing and you can't really tell when they're going to come in." Not that he wants viewers of his artwork to muse on any particular idea. Anyone who paints or makes films does it "basically for yourself" and when they're shown, you quickly realise what you see is completely different to what anyone else sees, Lynch says.

"Every viewer is different and each viewer sees a different thing," he says. "It's just a strange phenomenon."

The phenomenon of modern visual artists moving into filmmaking with aplomb, including Sam Taylor-Johnson (*Nowhere Boy* and the coming *Fifty Shades of Grey*), Julian Schnabel (*The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*), and reigning Academy Award best director Steve McQueen (*12 Years a Slave*) is entrenched. The trend of filmmakers heading the other way still has a way to go. But Lynch has avoided the stigma of the celebrity artist.

"It's a problem for some people maybe but I started out as a painter," he says.

"And in today's world more and more people do different things. More and more people have permission to get into different mediums.

"For a while, if you were a famous whatever and started painting, they'd say it was a stupid hobby and a pastime, and not take it seriously. But those days are changing and it doesn't really matter to me — but it gets me out of the celebrity painter thing."

Lynch is well beyond celebrity. There was a time the term Lynchian was used to describe his many imitators. That might re-emerge as his art is appraised and he returns to *Twin Peaks*.

A week after our conversation, Showtime announces the series' return. Cryptically, Lynch notes once he is "in love with an idea, you can't help yourself", but he doesn't have a cinema idea "driving me crazy right now".

No, television it is. He's caught another idea.

David Lynch: Between Two Worlds opens at QAGOMA in Brisbane in March next year.

TWIN PEAKS: THE VIEWING REVOLUTION WAS TELEVISED
By Graeme Blundell

We live in a time when television shows can engage our attention in such a way that we become obsessed with them. We even start to stalk them, impatient with anticipation until we can see them again. David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* was the first such program.

It was the story of the search by the eccentrically intuitive detective Special Agent Dale Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan) for the murderer of the beautiful Laura Palmer (Sheryl Lee, pictured), "day-ud, wrapped in plastic", in the small Washington state town of the title.

Lynch's offering changed TV with its disquieting, dreamlike style; its campy fusion of soap opera with 1950s murder mystery melodrama; its violence and sexuality; its focus on setting as character; and the way everything seemed connected to some deeper, murky, pattern of implication.

Co-created by *Hill Street Blues* writer Mark Frost, it debuted in 1990 — nine years before *The Sopranos* marked the beginning of the so-called golden age of TV storytelling. It was the first series about which fans become evangelical, desperate for others to share the experience in a way we expect of television today. It dared viewers to take it seriously and made us believe we would be loyal to it for seasons to come, in contrast to the flashy, interchangeable courtroom, hospital and police procedurals with which commercial TV was infatuated at the time.

It presaged an era in which we would establish new relationships with our favourite shows, such as *The Sopranos*, *The Wire*, *Lost*, *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad* and *Broadchurch*, watching them in different ways. They would no longer be simply diverting pastimes but part of our lives, deserving of our passion in a way TV shows had never been.

We obsessed about who killed Laura Palmer; the dancing dwarf who spoke backwards; the one-armed man; the traffic lights that kept turning red; the Log Lady; why the fish was in the percolator; and the meaning of that damned ceiling fan.

A huge critical and commercial hit in its first season, the show was too quickly a victim of its own success, not enduring beyond its second outing. "It was like we had a little goose that kept laying golden eggs and then we were asked to take that little goose and snip its head off," Lynch said. Lynch's reimagining next year of *Twin Peaks* will be watched closely, by old and new generations alike.

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Williams, Maxwell. "David Lynch Continues to Haunt American Culture, Onscreen and On Canvas."
www.artsy.net (Artsy), 6 November 2014.

David Lynch, *Airplane Tower* (2013). Source: Kayne Griffin Corcoran

Everyone knows that from 1977 to 2006, David Lynch was responsible for many of the oddest, most imaginative movies and television series in American entertainment history: *Eraserhead*, *Twin Peaks*, *Blue Velvet*, *Mulholland Drive*, *Elephant Man*—the list goes on. According to a recent *New York Times* article about Lynch's paintings, artists like Cindy Sherman and Gregory Crewdson count his films as inspiration in their own work. What most don't know is that he got into filmmaking through the idea that he could make a "moving painting," as he told *Art+Auction* Magazine in 2013. In fact, Lynch studied painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (PAFA) in the '60s, and his work is currently on view there in *David Lynch: The Unified Field* through January 11, 2015.

Lynch is certainly an impressive painter. He has painted consistently through his career, and has, somewhat surreptitiously, staged nearly 30 solo shows at places like Leo Castelli Gallery, the Tokyo Museum of Contemporary Art, Tilton Gallery, and the Max Ernst Museum in Bruhl, Germany. I had the pleasure of seeing Lynch's 2013 show, "Naming/New Works," at Kayne Griffin Corcoran's mid-city gallery in Los Angeles. In that show, the large paintings ranged from morbid (a plane about to collide with a tower) to irreverent (a laughing zebra and an abstracted female figure, with the words "My girlfriend had red hair") to mundane (a truck carrying a log on a cloudy day). It's very easy to see the connection between Lynch's

paintings and his filmmaking; confounding narratives and a black sense of humor drive both practices in a similar way.

David Lynch, *My Girlfriend Had Red Hair* (2013). Source: Kayne Griffin Corcoran

Through his films, Lynch's aesthetics and style have become deeply pervasive throughout American popular culture, so it is inherently difficult to separate Lynch the Filmmaker (the term "Lynchian" may now have superseded "Kafka-esque" to describe absurdist situations) and Lynch the Painter. But it's important to remember that his paintings aren't just a passing fad—latecomer painters like James Franco or Bob Dylan come to mind—but an integral part of his artistic vision. Lynch is a trained painter and has continued to paint through his entire career. The evidence is in the PAFA show, which features 90 paintings and drawings that Lynch made from 1965 through the present day.

It was recently announced, to rejoicing fans, that Lynch has been working on new episodes of the massively popular TV show *Twin Peaks*, which will mark his first work in moving images in nearly a decade. Perhaps working on the show will feed further explorations into painting, or maybe they are independent entities for Lynch, and he'd be painting no matter what. What is certain is that regardless of the medium, Lynch will always be creating works that haunt and provoke.

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Adelson, Fred B. "David Lynch: 'Philadelphia is percolating in me'." *www.courierpostonline.com (Courier Post)*, 19 October 2014.

Courier Post
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

David Lynch, who was enrolled for three semesters at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in the 1960s, will have an exhibition of his work on display at the Academy through Jan. 11. Lynch, also known as a filmmaker, said 'I get something from painting that I don't get from any other medium.' (Photo: Photograph courtesy the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts)

"I never had what I consider an original idea until I was in Philadelphia," David Lynch, 68, told Robert Cozzolino, senior curator and curator of modern art at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

Though Lynch only enrolled for three semesters, the Academy has reconnected with its celebrated student. Yes, this is *the* David Lynch of "Eraserhead" (1977), "Elephant Man" (1980), "Blue Velvet" (1986), "Wild at Heart" (1990), "Mulholland Drive" (2001), and "Twin Peaks" (1990-91), the popular television murder mystery series that after 25 years will return in 2016 for nine new episodes on Showtime.

"David Lynch: The Unified Field" is an exhibition of 90 paintings, drawings, prints, mixed-media constructions and three short experimental films. On view at the Academy's Landmark Building until Jan. 11, it is the artist's "first major museum show in the United States."

Last month at a press conference at the Academy, Lynch candidly admitted: “I get something from painting that I don’t get from any other medium.”

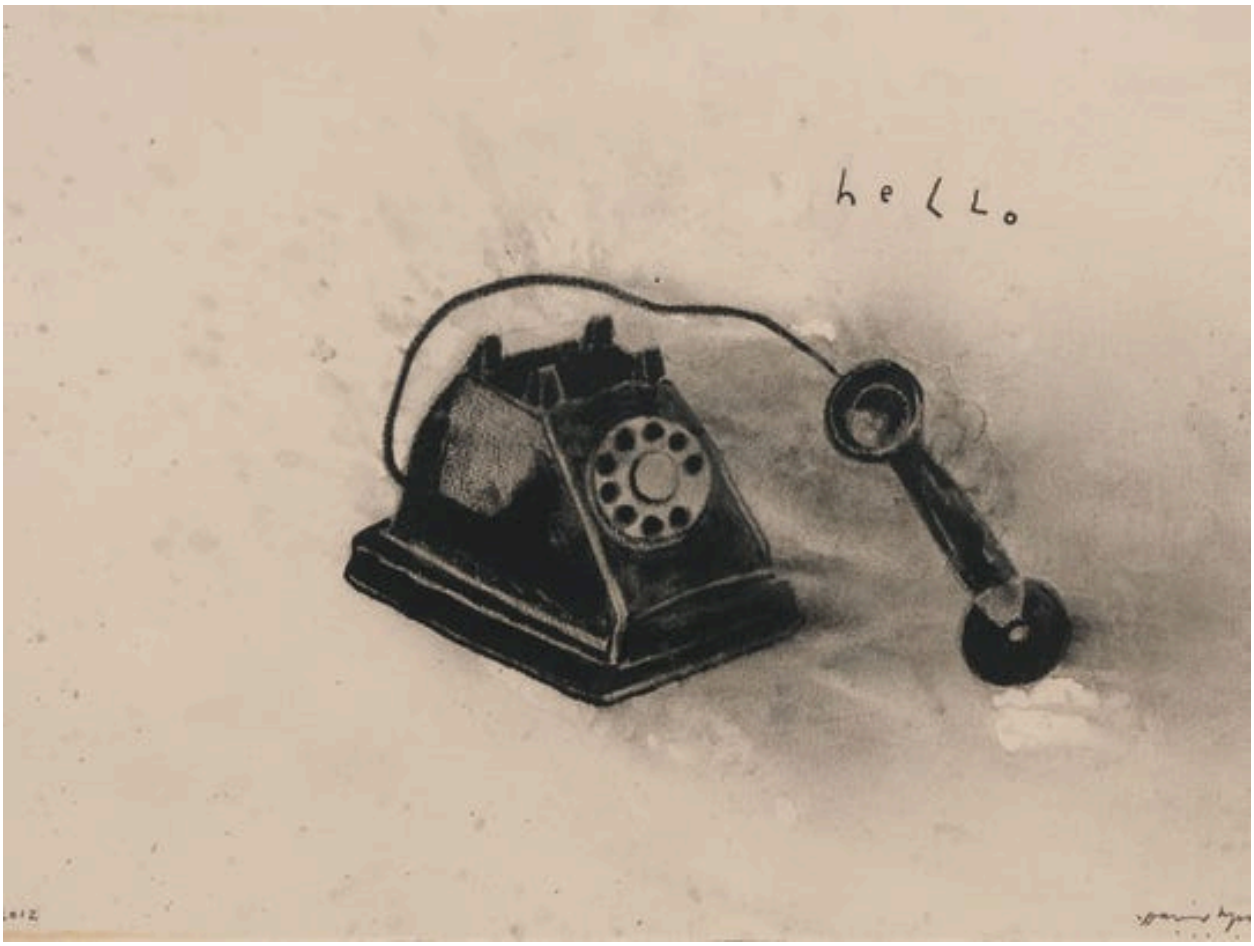
“I only wanted to be a painter.”

On the other hand, Lynch acknowledged: “I got into film by accident in this very building.”

“Great students were here, and everybody was a worker,’’ he reminisced. “We inspired one another. Maybe the age I was when I was here and things I experienced, no place has influenced me as much as Philadelphia. “Something clicked in Philly.”

With the show’s accompanying catalog and its scholarly essay by Cozzolino, Lynch is now receiving serious attention as a studio artist, something that has been overshadowed by his successful film career.

Nonetheless, the curator wrote: “Painting is the activity in his creative life from which everything else flows.”



‘Hello,’ a drawing of an old-style black telephone, has a sinister presence. *(Photo: PAFA)*

Similarly, in a telephone conversation, Kenneth Kaleta, author of a monograph on David Lynch published in 1993 and professor of film history at Rowan University, concurs that “it is impossible to deny his debt to painting ... (He is) a painterly filmmaker.”

For the 20-something art student in the late '60s, Philadelphia and its "vivid images" established an enduring foundation for his multifaceted talent. Lynch lived across the street from the city morgue, which he even visited one evening at midnight.

"It wasn't a normal city when I was here," Lynch recalled. "The fear, insanity, corruption, filth, despair, violence in the air was so beautiful to me."

"Philadelphia is percolating in me," Lynch added.

It is, therefore, not surprising to encounter pictures that are nightmarish fantasies where evil always seems to lurk. Even a subject as seemingly innocuous as "Hello," a drawing of an old-style black telephone with its receiver off the hook, has a sinister presence, suggesting imminent danger.

"Maybe some drawings or some paintings have given an idea for a film, but mostly, they're just two separate worlds," Lynch remarked.

Other than a couple of very early short films from his Philadelphia days, the exhibit doesn't deal with his Academy Award-nominated feature films or television work.

The show covers more than 40 years dating from his student days of the late 1960s to several very recent drawings on loan from Frank Gehry, the celebrated architect who is currently working on a transformational project for the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

At the same time, this exhibit cannot be considered a truly comprehensive retrospective, since there are few examples of his art dating from the mid-1970s into the 1990s, the period when he was involved with filmmaking and television.

Even so, it is fascinating to see Lynch's noncinematic work, especially the earliest canvases, in the historic spaces at the same building where as a student he had taken classes from January 1966 through the spring of 1967.

"He started as a visual artist and never put it down," Cozzolino declared.

In 1967 in his studio at the Academy, Lynch had an epiphany as he saw one of his nearly all black paintings; several of these early canvases are on view.

"I am looking at the painting (he no longer remembers exactly what one) and *from* the painting came wind ... And I'm looking at this and hearing this and I say, 'Oh, a moving painting. And that was it.' ''

For anyone who may be a bit skeptical about this tale that ultimately led him into filmmaking, Cozzolino points out, "Lynch has consistently told that story the same way for decades," believing he is "dead honest about it."

Unquestionably, the highlight of the show is "Six Men Getting Sick," a seminal work that was his ambitious attempt to create a moving picture. On view in its own gallery around the corner from where it was first presented, this installation is quite an extraordinary piece of theater that hasn't been displayed since 1967 when it tied for first place, winning the Dr. William S. Biddle Cadwalader Memorial Prize.

A portrait of David Lynch by Adam Bordow. (Photo: PAFA)

Against a screen with three relief heads (self-portraits) on the upper left, a one-minute scratchy film is projected; it is accompanied by a tape recording of a siren. Using X-rays and anatomical drawings of internal organs, the figures regurgitate in a syncopated rhythm. Drips of "action" painting as vomit are used to full visual advantage. The word "SICK" is also seen flashing on the surface. There is sincere honesty in its makeshift character, emphasizing how Lynch was "trying to figure it out as he was doing it."

All the key components of Lynch's art are fully manifested in the weird imagery of this "multisensory experience" that combines painting, sculpture, film, and installation. Using a newly purchased 16mm wind-up camera like any other art tool, Lynch credits faculty at the Academy for encouraging him to experiment. This is an especially remarkable accomplishment, considering the school wasn't then teaching filmmaking, animation or performance art.

The nurturing artistic community at the Academy and the dark, gritty urban landscape were decidedly influential for the aspiring young artist. Nonetheless, in late 1970, after four years, he left Philadelphia with his then wife and 2-year- old daughter to relocate to Los Angeles, accepting a fellowship at the American Film Institute Center for Advanced Film Studies. He is still based in L.A., where he also maintains his painting studio.

The artist does think of himself as a storyteller. This is certainly reinforced by the prominent use of language as part of Lynch's pictorial imagery.

He effectively uses scratchy penmanship for his "little stories" (he submitted the same kind of writing for the exhibition title), which is visually different from the more fluid script of his signature. Some of his inscriptions may seem crude and lack refinement, just as his drawn imagery is deliberately bad, suggesting an untrained street artist.

Curiously, the artist isn't very forthcoming about listing what materials he has used for these mixed-media constructions. Notice things like Band-Aids, insects, cigarette butts, cigarette filters, real teeth, a pinecone and horsehair.

It is impossible to appreciate his works without seeing them in person. The tactile surfaces and use of crude materials, which draw the viewer closer to each surface, enhance the mood of post-industrial urban decay. The canvases done by a 20-something in Philadelphia do, however, represent a refreshing genuineness and authenticity.

Some of his more recent paintings are handsomely presented in large frames like picture windows but seem a bit more mannered. With a childlike persona, Lynch is still dealing with themes of violence, sexuality and deviance. He does say that his work isn't autobiographical, but he believes: "No matter what type of childhood you have, there's a feeling that you're sensing more than what you're seeing in front of you ... A lot of information comes to us, not in the form of words or pictures, it's a feeling in the air."

Cozzolino pointed out that his "additive, intuitive approach" as a filmmaker is much more characteristic of the painting process. Thus, this special exhibit offers a glimpse at Lynch's creative range, albeit intimately private yet omnipresent.

Lynch does understand: “When you’re known for one thing and you do something else, it’s not taken so seriously. But now, the world is different ...people do many different things now and it’s fine. “

“And somewhere ... it comes together, because, strangely, everything is unified on one level ... The unified field.”

Fred B. Adelson is a professor of art history at Rowan University.

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Hoban, Phoebe. "David Lynch on His First Retrospective of Original Artwork."
tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com (T Magazine), 12 September 2014.

"Screen for Six Men Getting Sick and Six Men Getting Sick," 1967. "I built the screen for the painting in an old hotel with empty rooms that we were given to work in as students," David Lynch says. "My friend Jack Fisk cast two heads of me, and I cast one of him, to make a sculptured movie screen. There is a one-minute loop projected onto the screen that shows the men's stomachs growing and they appear to be feeling sickness coming. I wanted to have a siren going. I always thought from the very beginning that films were sound and pictures, and I love sounds and I think the siren is definitely part of modern life." *Collection of Rodger LaPelle and Christine McGinnis, Philadelphia*

Although he's best-known for his middle-America-meets-the-macabre movies, David Lynch started out as a painter and has not put down his brushes in 40-something years. Not surprisingly, the director known for his darkly visceral vision creates canvases that are anything but pretty pictures.

In fact, it was a single picture of a green garden –" done at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in the mid-60s, where Lynch studied for about a year –" that launched the artist into his film career. Looking at his own painting, Lynch suddenly sensed a wind blowing through the plants. This epiphany resulted in his first film in 1967, a one-minute animation called "Six Men Getting Sick," projected as a continuous loop onto a plaster screen sculpted with bas reliefs. The resulting scene was replete with stomachs filling

with liquid, flames erupting and six heads regurgitating. "I started out being a painter and the film came out of wanting to make a picture move," Lynch explains, "so I always say the same rules of painting apply to a lot of cinema, and you could say that films are moving paintings that tell a story with sound."

From then on, Lynch has brought forth some of the most original images in cinematic history, from the mutant baby in "Eraserhead" to the grotesque but poignant figure of the Elephant Man to the unforgettable image of Dennis Hopper gasping through his oxygen mask in "Blue Velvet." And who could forget the rotting, ant-covered ear found in a pristine field by the film's naive protagonist, Jeffrey –" played by Kyle MacLachlan, who later starred in Lynch's game-changing television series, "Twin Peaks"?

Like that decaying ear, Lynch's paintings are a vivid portal into his unique imagination. Now, his first retrospective in the United States, made up of some 90 paintings and drawings, is opening at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts this Saturday. In the above slideshow, Lynch spoke to T about the inspiration for some of his works on view.

"David Lynch: the Unified Field" is on view Sept. 13 through Jan. 11 at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Historic Landmark Building, 118 North Broad Street, Philadelphia, pafa.org.

David Lynch, *Six Men Getting Sick* (detail), 1967, fiberglass, resin, acrylic, and graphite on Masonite panel, 16-mm projection (color, sound, 60 seconds).

"Woman with Screaming Head," 1968. "'Woman with Screaming Head' is heavily influenced by Bacon. I saw Bacon's show at Marlborough the year before . . . I really believe that I was always trying to find my own voice, but Bacon was a heavy influence on me, he is all about organic phenomenon and distortion of a figure, things I just love. How he used paint and how he did the figure and the fast and slow areas and the stage and the proportions are just exquisite, just absolutely perfect." Collection of Rodger LaPelle and Christine McGinnis, Philadelphia

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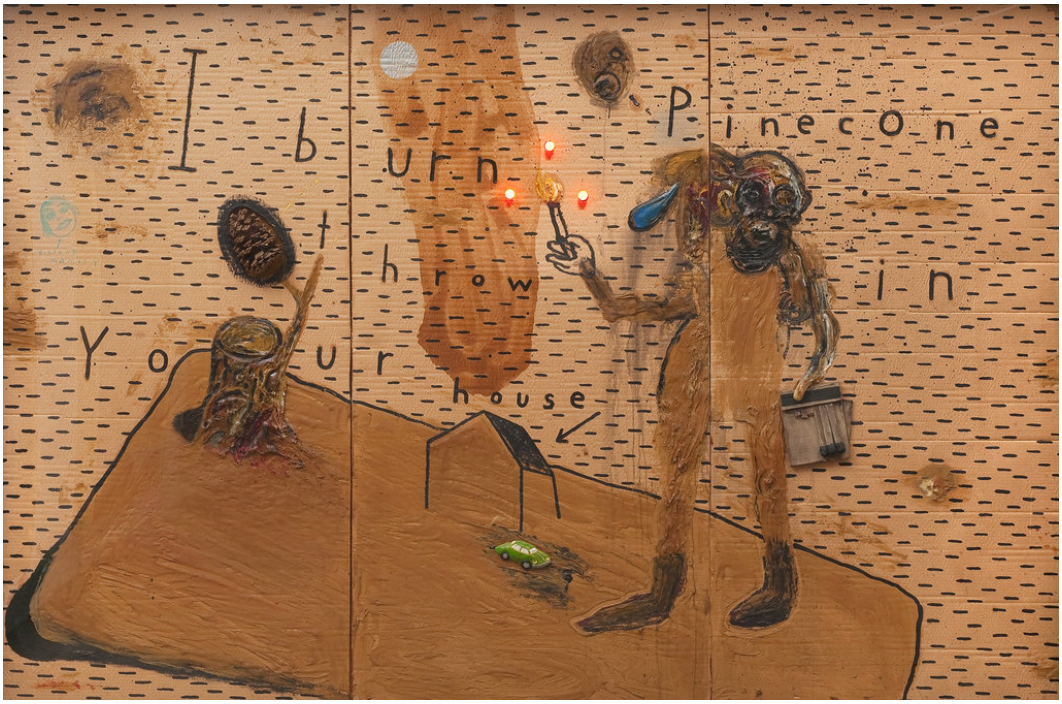
"Factory Building," 2012. "Philadelphia was very intense for me. I always say it took a year for the fear to lift away once I left. It was corrupt, it was filthy, it was insane, it was violent. I'd see things and feel things in that city. But at the same time there was a superpositive thing: the buildings, when I was there, they all had a soot and a patina that was so beautiful and it seemed like a deep, deep beauty of architecture, and wall treatments and molding and proportions and colors, and it all kind of came together. And I always said my biggest influence was this city at that time." Collection of Beth Rudin DeWoody



"I Burn Pinecone and Throw it in Your House," 2009. "This is sort of self-explanatory. A lot of men get angry at certain things, and women are one of those things. I am sure there are many happy homes, but on the other side, behind those curtained windows and closed doors there could be hell in there. And I love fire. It's one of the most magical things ever. I love the vitrine thing, to have windows or glass in front of things, a kind of view box. So I built those matches and the bulbs, which come out the back to get changed, and designed the glass in front of it." Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Karl Pfefferle, Munich

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"Man Eating," 2010. "I've done a bunch of watercolors of people eating, and it's something that people do and it brings the hand to the head a lot and those shapes together are really nice. Everyone can relate to eating." Courtesy of the artist and Tilton Gallery, New York

"Boy Lights Fire," 2010. "This one is not so sinister, because I really think that all people are fascinated with fire. So he's just a boy who is enjoying lighting matches basically in his neighborhood and he's got a girl who lives next door. I think she's naked. I like these long arms because they can travel over in different areas. People can read into it whatever they want."

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"Pete Goes to His Girlfriend's House," 2009. "He's got a knife and a gun. He's going to visit. Who knows what will happen. She doesn't look too happy about it. There's smoke coming out of the chimney and a moon in the sky and she's in the window. That tiny image at the bottom is a motorcycle accident. You asked about my palette of browns and reds. I love cardboard and the color of cardboard. I love the feel of it and how the paint goes on it. It's a lot like earth."

"All I Want for Christmas is My Two Front Teeth," 2012. "There's smoke and fire and a man and woman entwined and bathed in headlights. The smoke and fire is coming from their activity and their relationship. It's outside, not inside where this activity might be more comfortable. It's right there, the whole thing, so it doesn't do any good to say any more." Courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles

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Newhall, Edith. "David Lynch's Dark Days." *www.artnews.com (ARTnews)*, 10 September 2014.

ARTNEWS

The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts brings together Lynch's early and recent works, beginning September 13

David Lynch, *He Has His Tools and Chemicals*, 2013. Collection of Frank and Berta Gehry

David Lynch, whose first feature-length film, *Eraserhead* (1977), was inspired by his experiences as an art student in Philadelphia in the late 1960s, has always had a love/hate relationship with the City of Brotherly Love.

But he has no conflicted feelings about his alma mater, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), which opens a survey of his paintings and drawings, "David Lynch: The Unified Field," on September 13. "I loved the academy, and the academy was very good to me," Lynch, 68, says. He even waxes nostalgic about the terrifying-but-fascinating city of his young adulthood. "Philadelphia used to have grit and soot on everything—and it made a really great mood."

The dark days of pollution are easily recalled in the earliest pieces in "Unified Field," made between 1965 and 1970. Large-scale, mostly black paintings express the fear Lynch felt while living in an apartment across from a mortuary in a rundown manufacturing section of the city and later in a house he shared with his first wife and child that was repeatedly broken into.

These works also reflect his first encounter with the paintings of Francis Bacon. "I was blown away by Bacon," says Lynch, who visited the British painter's 1968 show at Marlborough-Gerson Gallery on a trip to New York with fellow PAFA students. Lynch's *Woman with Screaming Head* reveals the influence of Bacon, as do *Untitled (cigarette filters)* and several other canvases from 1968. Likewise, it's hard not to

see inklings of the macabre sensibility and symbolism that permeate such Lynch classics as *Blue Velvet* (1986) and *Twin Peaks* (1990–91).

Lynch has continued to paint and show at galleries throughout his life as a filmmaker, and in 2007 the Fondation Cartier in Paris organized a traveling retrospective. But the PAFA survey is the first to place his early paintings and drawings in the context of his whole career; it also includes a companion show of works by his friends, instructors, and classmates in Philadelphia.

"Throughout a wide-ranging career, painting and drawing have been the resilient constants in his creative life," says Robert Cozzolino, the exhibition's curator. "I can think of no more fitting place to examine their role in his work than PAFA, where it all began."

A version of this story originally appeared in the September 2014 issue of ARTnews on page 36 under the title "David Lynch's Dark Days."

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Epstein, Edward. "Brotherly Love, David Lynch-Style." *www.artinamericamagazine.com (Art in America)*, 9 September 2014.

Art in America

David Lynch, *I Burn Pinecone and Throw In Your House,* 2009, mixed mediums on cardboard, electrical system, bulbs framed behind plexiglass, 72 by 108 inches. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Karl Pfefferle, Munich, Germany.

Best known as the Academy Award-nominated director of such films as *Blue Velvet* and *Mulholland Drive*, David Lynch is also a prolific painter and printmaker. Nearly 100 of his works make up a retrospective, "The Unified Field," at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) in Philadelphia (Sept. 13, 2014-Jan. 11, 2015), where he trained as a painter and made his first forays into filmmaking during the late 1960s. Like his films, Lynch's paintings often feature grotesque bodies, violent scenes and images of decay. Large works in paint and mixed mediums on cardboard, such as *Pete Goes to his Girlfriend's House* (2009) and *I Burn Pinecone and Throw In Your House* (2009), showcase the kind of weird domestic intrigue that is at the heart of Lynch's first major film, *Eraserhead* (1977). Each of these paintings features a hideous-looking character performing a destructive act, with small lights and other objects affixed to the panel and the title of the work scrawled in child-like letters.

The artist credits the distressed cityscape of Philadelphia, where he spent four years, as a primary influence. Living there during the height of the chaos, neglect and racial animosity that accompanied white flight, Lynch experienced the City of Brotherly Love at its least loving. Although it was filmed in Los Angeles, *Eraserhead's* landscape bears a striking resemblance to the acres of deserted warehouses that

cover the areas north of Philadelphia's center—an area that has been dubbed "The Eraserhood" by local artists.

In advance of the show, Lynch spoke to *A.i.A.* about painting and film, Vedic wisdom, and what inspires his work—as well as what does not, for example, other artists or filmmakers.

David Lynch, *Pete Goes to His Girlfriend's House,* 2009, mixed mediums on cardboard, 72 by 108 inches. Courtesy the artist.

EDWARD EPSTEIN Your films read as a series of carefully composed frames, which are each much like individual paintings. In *Blue Velvet* [1986], the darks and lights on the actors' flesh are particularly striking. The drama is reminiscent of Caravaggio. Were you influenced by Baroque painting?

DAVID LYNCH No. I'm not an art buff at all. I just wanted to be a painter. And that's all I wanted to do starting in the ninth grade. I'm not a studier. Even in film, I'm the worst film buff.

EPSTEIN When you were at the PAFA, were there any paintings in the collection there that influenced you?

LYNCH No. I never went up to the gallery. I don't know what they had up there. I was thrilled at the Academy because of the students primarily—we inspired one another. And there were a couple of great teachers. But, I really only went in to school a couple of times a week and painted where I lived.

EPSTEIN A lot of people experience the destruction in your work as negative. Would you say it's a positive process?

LYNCH It's a very positive process. There's a Vedic expression, "the world is as you are." It's the same with cinema, painting, photographs and music. A film has exactly the same frames in every screening, but viewers have their own take—it speaks to Suzy one way and Tom another. And some people see darkness, some humor, some light—and some just walk away.

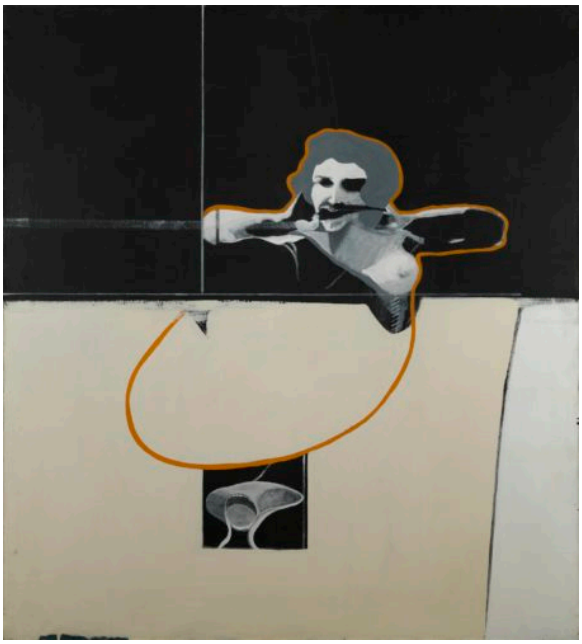
David Lynch, *Factory Building,*2012, mixed mediums on paper, 15¼ by 22¼ inches. Collection of Beth Rudin DeWoody.

EPSTEIN The grotesque bodies in both your film and painting—I'm thinking of the film *Eraserhead* or the painting *Pete Goes to His Girlfriend's House*—look like medical oddities. When you were in Philadelphia, did you ever visit the Mütter museum, which has a huge collection of such oddities on display?

LYNCH No, but I have heard of it. I did see many oddities in Philly on the street.

EPSTEIN Can you talk more about that?

LYNCH I lived in Philly from '65 to '70, and it was a different place then. When I visited a couple of years ago it seemed much more normal, much more like every other city. One of the things that got added since I was there is graffiti. For me, graffiti has pretty much ruined every city. Every bit of beauty of the patina of coal dust or acid rain—all of these things that age these buildings so beautifully, and made a mood of the city, were completely taken away by cheap aluminum storm windows and graffiti. And for cinema, if there wasn't graffiti, you could go to places and see them as if you'd gone back in time and you could see the beauty of those old buildings and get the mood.



David Lynch, *Woman with Screaming Head,* 1968, acrylic on canvas, 66 by 60 inches. Collection of Rodger LaPelle and Christine McGinnis, Philadelphia, Penn.

EPSTEIN Philadelphia's Mural Arts program just completed a project in which they invited Berlin artist Katharina Grosse to spray paint the wayside of the rail line through Philadelphia.

LYNCH A travesty in my book. Unreal. The walls on railroad lines, they were built so beautifully. They say that style follows function—every detail of how they put one thing together with another: the electric wires, the stonework, the plaster work, the metal of the windows, the railroad signs—all of this stuff is like beautiful sculpture. And as it gets older it just gets richer and more beautiful. They're sacred things, and you should never deface them.

EPSTEIN On another topic, the female figures in your paintings look pristine and vulnerable—some of them are nude—whereas the males have grotesque faces. It's similar with the female characters in your films. How do you develop the characters?

LYNCH Each work is its own thing. A woman in a film doesn't represent all women. Same thing with the paintings. It's a little world, and there might be a small story in it. I know that there is domestic violence, and all kinds of violence, and these things go into the air, and we all pick up on them.

EPSTEIN So would you say that each piece is an idea unto itself, and the next one is a complete departure?

LYNCH It could be. Sometimes we get on a roll, and the next painting is similar to the one that preceded it. And those things, for me, start getting burned out. And that's a sadness, especially if I don't know where it's going to go from there. So these transitions come up. I'm in a transition with the work right now, and I'm experimenting, and I don't know where I'm going.

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Sheets, Hilarie M. "David Lynch, Who Began as a Visual Artist, Gets a Museum Show."
www.nytimes.com (The New York Times), 28 August 2014.

The New York Times

David Lynch studied art in Philadelphia before gravitating to film. Credit Williams + Hirakawa for The New York Times

LOS ANGELES — David Lynch's rooftop painting studio, perched high in the Hollywood Hills, is littered with the byproduct of work. Paintings with crude, childlike figures doing menacing things lean up against the walls, unfinished drawings are strewn over his huge desk, and the floor is carpeted with cigarette butts. While the dark visual sensibility of his film work — "Eraserhead" (1977), "The Elephant Man" (1980), "Blue Velvet" (1986), "Wild at Heart" (1990), "Mulholland Drive" (2001), and his TV series "Twin Peaks" (1990-91) — has permeated the public consciousness and widely influenced other filmmakers, writers and artists (including Cindy Sherman and Gregory Crewdson), Mr. Lynch's own visual art is almost unknown. Yet painting is where he started, enrolled as an advanced student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia in 1966 and '67, and it is the medium he continues to work in most actively. His first United States museum retrospective, "David Lynch: The Unified Field," opens at the Pennsylvania Academy on Sept. 13.

"I loved my time at the academy," Mr. Lynch said, drinking coffee and smoking at his desk, his genial small-town manner a vivid counterpoint to the eerie tenor of his films. "The building was almost black. All of Philadelphia had a kind of coal-dust patina and a mood that was just spectacular. There was violence and fear and corruption, insanity, despair, sadness, just in the atmosphere in that city. I loved the people there. All these things, whatever way it was, was my biggest influence."

Despite the cultlike devotion to Mr. Lynch's films, "nobody's paid attention to him in terms of my colleagues at American museums," observed Robert Cozzolino, the senior curator of the Pennsylvania Academy, who organized the show. It brings together paintings and drawings from five decades and includes a trove of barely exhibited early work from Mr. Lynch's time in Philadelphia that set the tone for everything that followed.

"I think the art world has been suspicious of David, although he was trained as an artist," said Brett Littman, executive director of the Drawing Center in New York, referring to the fashion of creative people prominent in one arena trying their hand in another. "He's not James Franco." Mr. Littman organized a smaller show of Mr. Lynch's works on paper and photographs last year in Los Angeles at Kayne Griffin Corcoran, which represents the artist.

"David changed the way that we think about visual culture in the United States through his movies," Mr. Littman said. "You may or may not like his visual artwork, but it's definitely worth looking at."

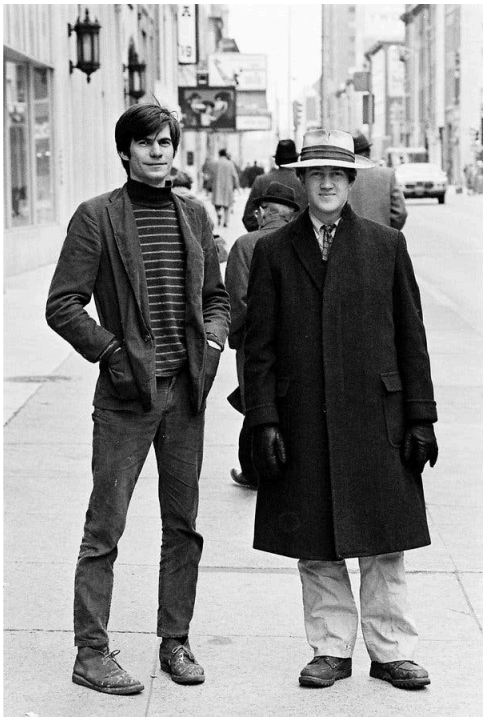
Mr. Lynch, working on "Small Boy in His Room" (2009).Credit David Lynch

The 68-year-old Mr. Lynch, in his uniform white shirt and khakis, his shock of white hair piled high, said he has been wary of being misperceived as a "celebrity painter." While he has never pursued showing his work publicly, he hasn't rejected invitations either.

Isabella Rossellini, who starred in "Blue Velvet" and was romantically linked to Mr. Lynch in the late 1980s, brought his art to the attention of the art dealer Leo Castelli, who gave him a New York gallery exhibition in 1989. In 2007, the Fondation Cartier in Paris organized his first comprehensive exhibition, which traveled to Milan, Moscow and Copenhagen. When Mr. Cozzolino approached him about an exhibition for the academy, Mr. Lynch was thrilled.

It was a turning point for him. "Something clicked there," Mr. Cozzolino said. "A lot of what he continued to work on that's internationally known went back to that time."

Born in Missoula, Mont., Mr. Lynch painted as a child, moving with his father's jobs as a researcher in the Agriculture Department, to Spokane, Wash.; Durham, N.C.; and Boise, Idaho, before landing in Alexandria, Va., at the age of 14. There, he met Bushnell Keeler, a friend's father and a professional artist who became a mentor. "When I found out adults could do that," Mr. Lynch said, "that's all I wanted to do. I wanted to smoke cigarettes, drink coffee and paint." He took Saturday classes at the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, and spent money from odd jobs to rent studio spaces with his friend Jack Fisk throughout high school.


Mr. Lynch with his friend Jack Fisk in Philadelphia in 1967. Credit C.K. Williams

In 1964, Mr. Lynch started at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, but dropped out after the first year. "The students were just doing their assignments," he said. Mr. Fisk persuaded his friend to join him at Pennsylvania Academy in January 1966. "At the academy, everybody I met was a serious painter," Mr. Lynch said. "I was just starting to find something of my own. It was really inspiring."

He lived with Mr. Fisk north of the academy in a desolate, industrial area, where he would watch bodies being carried into the city morgue from a window. "I met the night watchman from the morgue at Pop's Diner, who invited me over," Mr. Lynch recalled. "He said, 'Ring the doorbell at midnight, and I'll let you in.' " Always interested in what he calls "organic phenomena"— stemming from his father's work with insects and tree diseases — Mr. Lynch was influenced visually by the decay in the urban landscape and objects being taken over by nature.

In 1967, late one night in his studio at the academy, he said, he saw plants start to stir in his painting and heard the sound of a wind from his canvas. "Oh, a moving painting," he remembers saying out loud. He and Bruce Samuelson, another student, exchanged ideas for animations, and Mr. Lynch bought himself the cheapest camera he could find. "David knew nothing about filmmaking or cameras or projectors," said Mr. Samuelson, a professor at the academy since 1973. "He's totally self-taught."

Mr. Lynch's drive to make a "moving painting" resulted in "Six Men Getting Sick," a multimedia installation for which he shared first prize in the school's experimental painting competition that spring. He cast a large-scale screen from resin, with three impressions of his own head protruding. On this sculpted surface, he projected a one-minute, hand-painted loop animating six heads in various stages of distress. As a siren wails and their faces distort, their stomachs fill with fluid that rushes to their mouths and erupts.

"It was a painting, it was an animation, it was a kinetic sculpture," said Mr. Samuelson, who saw it unveiled. "Everybody went nuts." Mr. Cozzolino is restaging the installation in the exhibition for the first time since 1967.

"He was trying to work on what is the most intense feeling you can have, of his body repelling," said Rodger LaPelle, a 1961 graduate of the academy who came to the competition. He hired Mr. Lynch — broke, just married to a fellow student, Peggy Lentz, and expecting a baby — to work for him and his wife, Christine McGinnis, another academy alum, in their printing business. The older couple became crucial benefactors over the next three years, employing Mr. Lynch as an engraver and giving him space on the weekends to make paintings, which they bought for $25 apiece. The exhibition includes more than a half-dozen of these canvases, weird hybrids of humans, animals and plants that were informed by the primal emotion of Francis Bacon's paintings, which Mr. Lynch saw in New York in 1968. In September, Rodger LaPelle Galleries in Philadelphia will exhibit several early paintings and more recent photogravures with nude figures by Mr. Lynch.

"Boy Lights Fire" (2010), by Mr. Lynch. Credit David Lynch

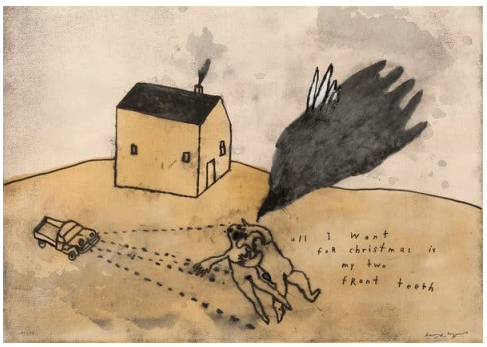
The Pennsylvania Academy show also displays his continuing experiments in film, combining animation and live action: "The Alphabet" (1968) and "The Grandmother" (1970), which starred Ms. McGinnis's mother as a doting nana birthed from a pod planted by a love-starved boy. The film won Mr. Lynch a fellowship at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles, where he moved with his family in 1970. For much of the next decade, he was consumed with realizing "Eraserhead," his first feature-length film, which Mr. Lynch said "was born out of Philadelphia." It is set in an industrial world where a young father slips between hallucinatory episodes as he is left to fend for a needy creature that looks like a cross of a human baby, a reptilian alien and a gourd.

Mr. Cozzolino sees "Eraserhead" as an artwork — "a filmed installation," he said. As Mr. Lynch became successful after 1980 in the mainstream film world — "The Elephant Man," another story of deformity, received eight Academy Award nominations that year — he continued to chase the idea of a "moving painting."

"I feel like his eye as a painter and his approach to thinking about how images can carry meaning rather than dialogue carrying a narrative has really affected the kind of filmmaker he is," Mr. Cozzolino said.

Fred Elmes, the cinematographer for "Blue Velvet," "Eraserhead" and "Wild at Heart," noted Mr. Lynch's extreme attention to the composition, palette and lighting of the tableaus they created before any action unfolded. "The mood of each frame was the most important thing," Mr. Elmes said. "I think that's directly related to creating a painting where the idea is to go into that frame. David's always been concerned with creating a little mystery that's going to draw viewers in."

The screen for "Six Men Getting Sick," (1967). Credit Rodger LaPelle and Christine McGinnis



"All I Want for Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth" (2012). Credit David Lynch/Kayne Griffin Corcoran Gallery

The Philadelphia Film Society will be screening every feature film by Mr. Lynch, including his most recent, "Inland Empire" (2006), in partnership with the museum exhibition.

"As a painter, you do everything yourself, and I thought cinema was that way," Mr. Lynch said, "like a painting, but you have people helping you." That was the case with "Eraserhead," when he was able to immerse himself in that world over the five years it took to make it. "When there's more and more money involved," he continued, sounding a note of disillusionment, "you'd think you could spend more time, but that's not true. The whole thing is based on staying on schedule."

Whether or not that's why he produced "Inland Empire" independently and hasn't made another film in eight years, Mr. Lynch has been absorbed in recent years with work in the studio — both his art and recording original music in his sound studio right below his painting studio. The refinement of his early paintings has given way to a style more deliberately naïve and messy, suggesting a child's vantage point.

"For me, there's some possible great magic in that world," he said. One gallery at the academy will be devoted to recent works based on the theme of home and domesticity, where couples are often locked in ambiguous embraces that could be amorous or suffocating. His frequent juxtaposition of phrases such as "I hold you tight" or "Who is in my house?" offer multiple readings, humorous and ominous.

"I like to think very close to home," said Mr. Lynch, who has a 2-year-old daughter with his wife, Emily Stofle, an actress in "Inland Empire." (He has three other children from as many previous marriages.) "Everything that goes on out there in the whole world goes on in the small world, just in a little different way."

As for showing any work in progress, he demurs. "Right now, I'm lost in a transition," Mr. Lynch said. "The old is dead, and I don't know what the new is. The only way to find the new is to start different things and see if there's something that can come out of experimentation. It's somewhat unsettling, but it's a hopeful thing in a way. I've been here before, lots of times."

A version of this article appears in print on Aug. 31, 2014, Section AR, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: Paintings (No Blue Velvet).

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Leopold, Shelley. "David Lynch: One Frame at a Time." *artillerymag.com (Artillery Magazine)*, 1 July 2014.

ARTILLERY

David Lynch, *Change the Fuckin' Channel Fuckface*, 2008-9. Photo Credit: Robert Wedemeyer. All images courtesy the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran Los Angeles

Disillusioned with the politics of network television and the intricate financing of big studio films, filmmaker David Lynch has once again returned focus to his core business: being an artist.

Inspired as a teen by realist painter Robert Henri, Lynch took Henri's legacy tome,*The Art Spirit*, to heart and enrolled as a painter at Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. It was there that Lynch dedicated himself to painting and living what he defines as "the art life."

"The art life means a freedom to have time for the good things to happen," Lynch explains in his autobiographical 2006 book, *Catching the Big Fish*. "There's not always a lot of time for other things."

However, in 1967, Lynch took interest in an annual collegiate experimental art contest and discovered film as a way "to make paintings move." He entered and won with a project inspired by a painting of his of a garden at night called *Six Men Getting Sick*. It consisted of stop motion animation projected on a sculptured screen. Considered to be his first foray into film, the piece will be restaged for the first time since as part of the Academy's Lynch retrospective, *David Lynch: The Unified Field*, opening September 13, 2014 and running until January 11, 2015. With this award-winning installation, Lynch's love for film was born,

and *Eraserhead*, his breakout film inspired by the surrounding industrial smokestacks of Philadelphia, was soon to follow.

David Lynch, *Boy Lights Fire*, 2010. Photo Credit: Robert Wedemeyer

Lynch credits his twice-daily practice of Transcendental Meditation as the unending source of all his ideas. He currently makes music, designs and builds furniture and yes, still paints. Sometimes these concepts are multimedia compositions incorporating collage, layers of acrylic paint and miniatures, other times they are simple ink drawings shown like comic book panels. Recent watercolor work in a loose black, white and red style, suggests a haunted subconscious scratching, a beautiful ransom note left behind as evidence of a nightmare or an evil thought.

Recently in Paris, Lynch collaborated on a limited edition print with French street artist and TED award recipient, JR. Part photograph, part automatic drawing, the piece was produced in Paris' oldest print shop, its lithography presses previously used by Picasso, Matisse, Miró, Chagall and Giacometti. Their finished artwork was promoted entirely through Instagram and an email-only company called 99prints. Thanks to dedicated Lynch fans and JR's 382,000 followers, the "I Fix My Head II" prints sold out in less than 60 minutes, to a tune of $3000 a piece.

Still, it's Lynch's photographs that seem to capture his true calling and demonstrate his unique eye for composition and light. In 2009, Lynch took on "Dark Night of the Soul," a project with musicians Dangermouse and the late Mark Linkous. Fifty of Lynch's photographs were shown at Los Angeles' Michael Kohn Gallery, accompanied by the specially produced music. As the viewer stood in front of an

image, a specific song played on a hidden speaker above. The work was later released as a limited edition book and CD. In early 2014, a series of Lynch's abandoned factory photos were shown at the Photographer's Gallery in London.

David Lynch, *He Has His Tools and His Chemicals*, 2013. Photo Credit: Brian Forrest

Also the subject of a newly released book, *The Factory Photographs*, the black-and-white images were captured in England, New York, Germany and Poland. As an audience we are confronted with the texture of these looming relics, grand portraits of a bygone era, depicted without human interaction and almost all in the dead of winter. The ghostly shapes of these abandoned monoliths and the steely landscapes they create are what drew Lynch to the subject matter.

"Every medium is its own thing and is infinitely deep," Lynch told *Dazed* magazine in a recent interview. "And there's a connection, obviously, between cinema and still photography. For me, still photography was born out of cinema, but a still is just one frame that pulls you deeper and deeper in. It's about the beauty of one image."

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Frank, Priscilla. "David Lynch's Nightmarish World Comes To Life In Paintings." *www.huffpost.com (The Huffington Post)*, 22 November 2013.

HUFFPOST

Oh Mr. Bluebeard with a worm and Apple tree. Please help me Mr. Bluebeard."

In black and red ink, David Lynch has scrawled this cryptic message onto a canvas, the shaky, scratched-out script looking perhaps like a child's first attempts at handwriting, if not a frantically scribbled final plea for help. In the right hand corner a hand reaches out from nowhere. On the left is a bearded fellow with a giant worm protruding from his cheek.

Is this a page ripped from a deranged child's coloring book? A nightmarish hallucination or a sinister poem? The words meander between narrative and nonsense with the same quivering speed that they jump between explaining the image and further muddling it. Even the texture of the words, some of which have been erased or etched away, remains hesitant if not outright mistrustful, an interesting foil to the usual self-assured posture of the image adjacent text on gallery walls.

"Naming," David Lynch's upcoming exhibition at Kayne Griffin Corcoran Gallery in Los Angeles, explores the tenuous relationship between text and image. While we often think of a thing and its name as opposite sides of the same coin, Lynch's work directs us to the instances that reveal a more slippery relation.

"What's in a name?" curator Brett Littman ponders in an essay for the exhibition, before expanding on the philosophical implications of endowing an image with a correlating word. In Lynch's photographs, letters and words are already embedded in the world, whether hand-written on a poster or mounted on a dilapidated storefront sign. Time has rendered many of the written designations outdated and thus meaningless; they merely wait for their written remains to be updated or replaced.

In Lynch's watercolors, language functions altogether differently, with ghostly letters floating around the canvas, so barely legible they function more like additional images than carriers of meaning. In his multimedia canvases, the words Lynch chooses provide clues to understanding the works' dreamlike logic, actualizing the frustration that occurs when language escapes you. Littman combines 61 of Lynch's works,

throughout a variety of media and time periods, each employing a slightly different use of language's powers.

If you're a fan of Lynch's films you won't be surprised by his remarkable ability to turn a banal scenario or simple drawing into a warped nightmarish vision. Roaming the exhibition, it's impossible to tell where exactly Lynch's words are coming from and whether they should be trusted. "'David Lynch Naming' highlights how in the Lynchian universe the use of words, sentence fragments, and the act of naming something is never a simple gesture," Littman explains in his essay. "For Lynch, the drawing of an 'ant' and the written word 'ant' are never co-equal or necessarily co-descriptive."

We reached out to Littman to find out more about his unusual curation technique and working with the enigmatic film icon.

What was your relationship to David Lynch's work prior to the show?

David was introduced to me about a year and a half ago by [L.A. gallerist] Bill Griffin. He came and visited me twice at The Drawing Center. I was aware of his artwork dating back to 2006; I was deputy director at MoMA PS1 and we were considering showing his work there. I had some time to familiarize myself with the paintings and drawings he had done at that time. I looked at about 300 or 400 works and one of the things that stood out to me personally was this relationship between text and image.

David has a kind of predilection towards having text and images in every kind of media that he has ever worked in. Be that the photography, the drawings, the watercolors, the prints and also the films. One of the ideas that David and I had was about the concept of naming — and I mean naming in a spiritual capacity.

How do you mean *spiritual*?

David is very into transcendental meditation, and there is a spiritual belief that when the gods name things they come into existence. To me, that felt like how David described his own process of naming. He always has to give something a name to make it into some kind of object. For example in one piece, "The Ricky Board," a 1987 drawing, he drew a bunch of rickies, or flies, and gave them proper names like Steve or John or Bucky. He said as he named each of the flies they took on personalities and had a kind of uniqueness to them.

It's a little different from the work that Ed Ruscha and John Baldessari did in L.A. when they were working with text. But then again, it also put David into a context — maybe standing at a distance from them but it was interesting for to me to juxtapose those things together in my mind.

Many of Lynch's images contain text in them but remain untitled as artworks. How does that factor into his naming practice?

David does not title many of his works but for this show but I think there is always some fragment of text draws him to the work in the first place. To me it's clear that the core of his images is the text itself, that's what drew his eye. The photography for me was the real revelation. These are very much like Robert Adams' 1970s photos, these almost banal, abandoned buildings in the landscape.

How is the exhibition organized?

I made a list of words featured inside the artwork and the whole show could be read almost as a concrete poem by stringing together these words. The exhibition is not chronological, it's not by media. I wanted it to be a little bit filmic.

Was this something you and Lynch came up with together?

I brought the idea to the table. David has a healthy skepticism of the word curation, I think. Over the course of these few days we had a bunch of conversations and I had time to convince him. He was very enthusiastic and excited that I found something that interested me, but I would not say most of his work is *about* that particular issue. He's not really nostalgic, he's not looking to the past. The work that he's made, he's made it, he exists. I think a lot of David's shows have tended to be somewhat uncurated and so I'm giving a framework, though it's certainly not the only interpretation of David's work.

Your exhibition essay touches on what it means to name an object according to theorists including Plato, John Locke and Ludwig Wittgenstein. How would you describe Lynch's approach?

I think that, for me, the earlier drawings in the 2000s, the very muddy, almost unreadable scratch text drawings display a real distrust of language as a universal tool of communication. There is a view that the inherited language that we've learned has to be unlearned. Since that time I believe that there is a little bit more clarity. The images that he's made are much less dark, less muddy.

Does this perspective of language translate into his films as well?

It definitely is consistent with "Alphabet," an early film which is also on display in the exhibition. And even in Twin Peaks, with the midget speaking backwards, you can see how words mean one thing but can also mean something else. Yet today I think David is communicating something slightly different, maybe as a result of his meditation. Some of the works are quite dark, but there are some new drawings that I've

published in my catalogue that have that kind of clarity to them. I think it's interesting to see that kind of shift. I think it's interesting to look at a person's work and see the progressions and the changes.

Do you think it's fair to say that instead of the words serving as captions for the images it's become the opposite? That the images are captions for the words?

I think it's a little more complicated than that. David and I talked about the way children point at things. The first acquisition of language by children, where everything is wonder. I kind of describe it as vibration. Sometimes the image comes first and a word is applied after. The name gives them a fission and a sense of meaning.

Then there's that kind of slippage from knowing what's real and what's not. When things are a little bit hard to comprehend — that's when the world gets interesting, when things start to break down. It happens to people with old age and Alzheimer's. Sometimes we look at something and lose the word for it; you have to re-find it and redefine it.

After working so closely with Lynch, how intentional do you think his work is?

I think his filmmaking and artmaking are two very different things. The filmmaking requires groups of people, full teams, and years of work. The artwork is a kind of respite from that; he was trained as an artist first, he studied painting. His first two student films, "Alphabet" and "Six Guys Projecting" were made to kind of animate the paintings. Whether or not his work is intentional — I think ideas come through meditation, they come through deep reflective thinking and then something kind of snaps together and then he moves on to the next instant. It's a reflection of something immediate. It may or may not have deeper meaning.

"David Lynch Naming" runs from November 23 until January 4 at Kayne Griffin Corcoran Gallery in Los Angeles.

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Tewksbury, Drew. "What's David Lynch Been Up To? Making Art and Music Instead of Movies."
www.lamag.com (Los Angeles Magazine), 21 November 2013.

An exhibition of the filmmaker's new paintings and watercolors opens this weekend in L.A.

Known for the haunting and immersive emotional landscapes of movies like *Blue Velvet*, *Mulholland Drive*, and *Twin Peaks*, David Lynch creates music and visual art that conveys the same sense of creepy wonder. This weekend, his newest work will be on display in a solo show at Kayne Griffin Corcoran. The show, which kicks off with an opening reception on Saturday, November 23 at 6 p.m., explores how Lynch's drawings, photographs, and film revolve around the titular theme, *Naming*.

Lynch hasn't directed a feature film since Inland Empire in 2006, but his artistic output hasn't slowed down. He has exhibited his watercolors and paintings in various solo shows over. In 2009, he created a 100-page photo book to accompany *Dark Night of the Soul*, a brooding and mysterious album from producer Danger Mouse and late Sparklehorse frontman Mark Linkous.

In recent years, 67-year-old Lynch has moved toward music, working with producer Dean Hurley to craft creepy soundscapes drenched in dark, bluesy rock. Earlier this month they released a 12" single, "Bad the John Boy," a Nine Inch Nails-ish outtake from the recording sessions for Lynch's sophomore album, *The Big Dream*.

When he's not issuing weather reports or sipping champagne, Lynch has moved away from lumbering cinematic productions that take years to realize and toward smaller projects—art, music, coffee—that he can release into the world with greater speed. The compulsion to create is the engine that drives Lynch process; it's the medium that follows the message.

Naming: November 23, 2013 – January 4, 2014. Kayne Griffin Corcoran, 1201 S. La Brea Ave.

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Ng, David. "David Lynch to show new works at solo gallery exhibition." *www.latimes.com (Los Angeles Times)*, 14 November 2013.

Los Angeles Times

David Lynch hasn't released a new feature since "Inland Empire" in 2006, but the director has been creating visual art and exhibiting surreal creations in gallery shows.

David Lynch will be opening a show this month at Kayne Griffin Corcoran. It will run Nov. 23 through Jan.4.

Lynch held solo exhibitions in Los Angeles in 2009 and 2011, and will be opening yet another show this month at Kayne Griffin Corcoran. The exhibition, which is being curated by Brett Littman, executive director of the Drawing Center in New York, will focus on how Lynch uses "naming" in film, photography, drawings and other works dating from 1968 to the present. Kayne Griffin Corcoran said the show will run from Nov. 23 to Jan. 4, and will feature a group of new paintings, drawings and watercolors by Lynch.

The filmmaker, whose credits include "Blue Velvet," "Mulholland Dr." and the "Twin Peaks" television series, has previously exhibited his art at William Griffin Gallery in Santa Monica. In 2009, he showed original artwork for the album "Dark Night of the Soul," featuring music by Danger Mouse and Sparklehorse, at L.A.'s Michael Kohn Gallery.

Next year, Lynch's work will be the subject of a retrospective show at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, where the director studied in his youth. The show will feature approximately 75 paintings and drawings created by Lynch since 1965. The exhibition will also include "Six Men Getting Sick" (1967), his first short film.

The exhibition in Philadelphia is scheduled to run Sept. 5, 2014, to Jan. 15, 2015.

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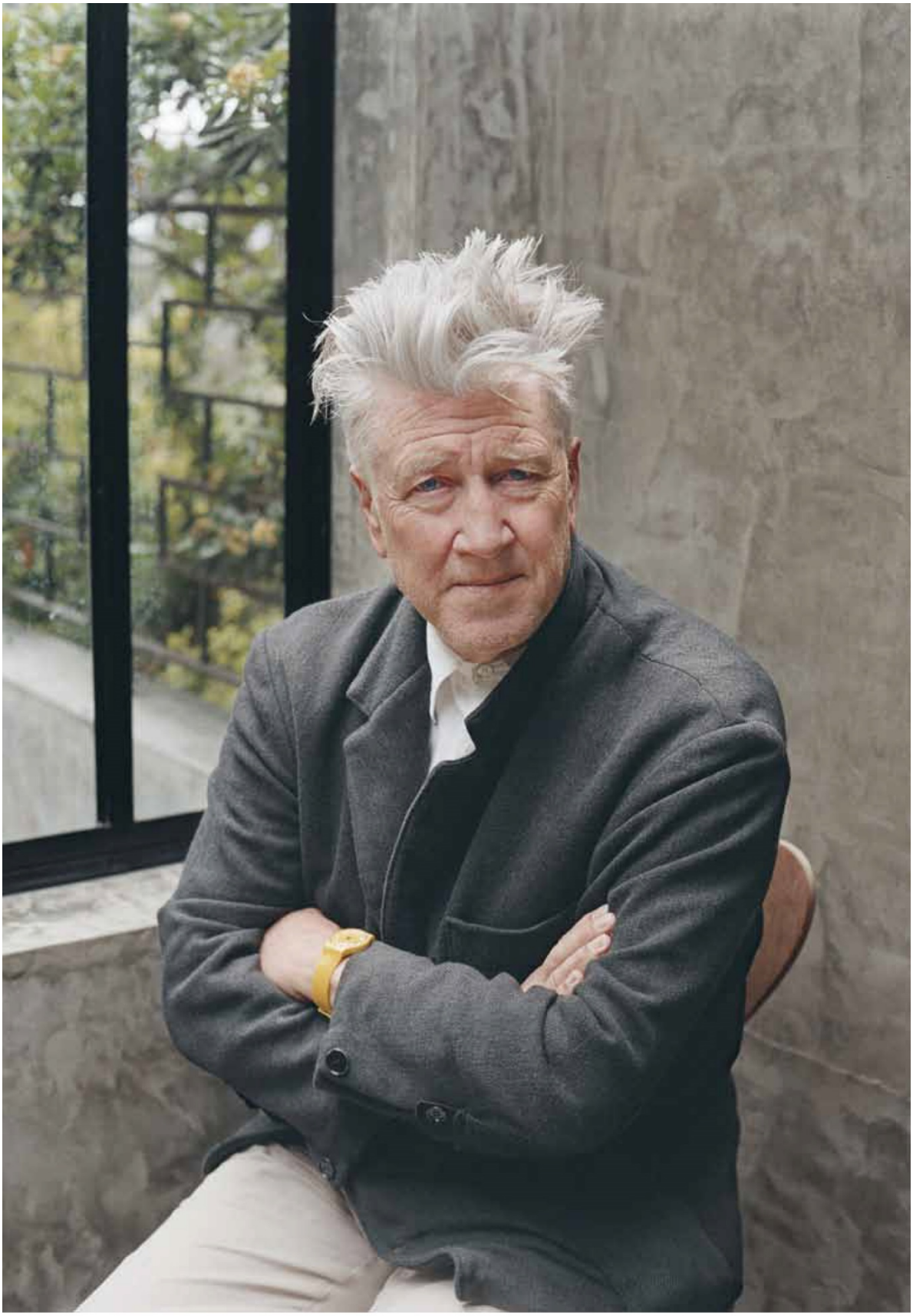
Israel, Alex. “David Lynch.” *Purple Fashion*, no. 16, Fall Winter 2011/2012, pp. 184-191.



DAVID LYNCH *is not just one of the most important filmmakers working today, he's* **a complete artist**. *He writes songs, paints, makes sculptures, and even designs lamps, in the consistently odd, weirdly dreamy, but resilient style for which the adjective Lynchian has become a catchword. We met at Griffin Contemporary Art Gallery in Santa Monica, where an exhibition of Lynch's recent paintings and sculptures filled the large, pristine white spaces, and asked him to talk about his enigmatic and ever-expanding personal universe.*

interview by ALEX ISRAEL
portrait by ANNABEL MEHRAN

All artworks photographed by Robert Wedemeyer, courtesy of William Griffin Gallery, Los Angeles

ALEX ISRAEL — *Tell me about your clothes. Do wear the same thing every day?*
DAVID LYNCH — What I'm wearing now? No, no, I'm dressed up today.

ALEX ISRAEL — *I ask this because I read somewhere that you wear the same thing every day.*
DAVID LYNCH — I'm in a suit as I'm speaking to you, but I don't wear one every day. Last Saturday I had to wear a suit because I was playing music with a friend. On Sunday I went to see my friend's film at the Sunset 5…

ALEX ISRAEL — *And you needed to look nice.*
DAVID LYNCH — I dressed up, yeah. I had to change from my work clothes to a suit — and I had to have my keys, wallet, money, and belt, and I had to change my shoes. It's a big deal to get all that stuff out and put it all away.

ALEX ISRAEL — *What film did you see?*
DAVID LYNCH — *Get Real! Wise Women Speak,* which was made by my friend Joni Steele Kimberlin. It's an important film, a good film. Women would love this film. It could be very inspiring for them. I think men would like it too. She talks about how important grandmothers are. Everybody knows how important grandmothers are, if they're lucky enough to have one around.

ALEX ISRAEL — *If you do wear a suit, is it generally a black suit?*
DAVID LYNCH — Yeah.

ALEX ISRAEL — *If you're not wearing a suit, you usually wear a white shirt and khakis. How long have you been sticking to this regimen?*
DAVID LYNCH — A pretty long time. I don't know how many years. I guess I started to wear khakis from Sears with work shirts when I was in high school. I like Gant and Brooks Brothers shirts. In Virginia, where I started out, there was an Ivy League undercurrent. You wanted to look somewhat sharp.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Preppy?*
DAVID LYNCH — Yeah. I liked it. I like to feel comfortable in my work clothes.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Has David Lynch become a character?*
DAVID LYNCH — Everyone's a character, in a way.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Are you a character of your own making — one from a David Lynch film?*
DAVID LYNCH — In a way, yes. But I don't think I'm unique in that way. You're a character of your own making, too.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Do you go about your work thinking in terms of the character you've become?*
DAVID LYNCH — Not really. If I see myself in a photograph, sometimes it doesn't really go with the work. Which is surprising sometimes.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Who did influence your painting?*
DAVID LYNCH — Well, let's see, I guess Francis Bacon was my biggest hero.

ALEX ISRAEL — *I'm trying to imagine art school in the '60s. It was such a radical period. Bacon made his great breakthrough, and Pop Art and Minimalism were developing. Were you aware of these movements?*

Man Studies Picture, 2008-2009, watercolor on paper, 17 3/4 x 21 inches(framed), 9 x 12 inches (paper)

DAVID LYNCH — Sure. But I liked organic things of a type that, at the time, painting had drifted away from. Slick Pop Art didn't thrill me.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Do you still feel that way?*
DAVID LYNCH — Yeah.

ALEX ISRAEL — *What about film? Were you interested in surrealist or experimental cinema?*
DAVID LYNCH — In Philadelphia there was a theatre called The Bandbox that ran all the New Wave French films. But I didn't think about cinema. I liked theater.

ALEX ISRAEL — *I read somewhere that one day while you were painting you were suddenly captivated by wind.*
DAVID LYNCH — Actually, I was sitting in a chair, in a space smaller than this room, looking at a painting. I don't remember how big it was, maybe four feet square. All of the sudden the painting sort of started to expand and contract and a wind-like sound came from it. I thought, "Moving painting!" Then I thought, "How could you make a moving painting?" Of course, that's stop motion, that's cinema. And that somehow led me to film.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Obviously, it was a moment of great impact.*
DAVID LYNCH — Looking back, it was incredible. At the time it was just an idea. But then I became really involved in the idea. I built a screen of about six by eight feet, which had three heads coming out of it. One of the heads was painted. I wanted to project film onto the screen, and I wanted the sculpted parts to distort the image. So that's what I did. But what happened wasn't exactly what I wanted.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Was your film,* Six Men Getting Sick, *projected on that sculpture?*
DAVID LYNCH — Yes. It was when I was at school. I had it on a loop. They had a projector which was on a stand that was quite tall. I built a kind of erector-set thing that took the film up almost to the ceiling and back down through the projector — and back up and down again — like a loop. I had speakers for the sounds — of sirens — but the sounds weren't in sync with the film. They were separate elements. The screen hung from wires onto a stage. In the film, in the center of the frame, I had what I wanted to be projected onto the sculpted part of the screen. I had to move the projector back so that the part of the film I wanted fell on the sculpted part of the screen, which hung in the center of the stage. The other parts fell off into darkness.

ALEX ISRAEL — *At the time, were film and painting part of one experience for you?*
DAVID LYNCH — No, they weren't, really. But for some reason, painting conjured up the desire to use film. But when I finished that one work, I thought that was it. First of all, it took a long time and it cost a lot more than I thought it would. So I didn't think I would do another one. But then a man commissioned me to do a work like it for his house. It didn't work out — which was a big blessing. I made *The Alphabet* instead. And that film, along with the script for *The Grandmother,* helped me to get an independent filmmakers grant from the

Left: Yellow Grey Lamp, 2002-2003, cold-rolled steel, plaster, tint, resin, 75 x 14 x 12 inches
Right: Lime Green Lamp, 2002-2003, cold-rolled steel, plaster, tint, resin, 71 x 14 x 12 inches

American Film Institute, which was brand new then. Talk about a life-changing phone call. Getting that grant was euphoric.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Did you move to Los Angeles right away?*
DAVID LYNCH — No, I made *The Grandmother* in Philadelphia, which was really great. But I needed more money. A great man, Tony Vellani, came up on the train from D.C. to Philadelphia and saw the almost finished version of *The Grandmother.* When I drove him back to D.C., he said, "I'll get you the extra money." He also told me I should apply to the new Center for Advanced Film Studies in Los Angeles. That was another euphoric moment. Bliss. Phenomenal. I was floating on air when I was accepted. That's when I moved to LA.

ALEX ISRAEL — *What was film school like for you, coming, as you did, out of a fine arts background?*
DAVID LYNCH — Everything is the same, in that everything starts with an idea. If you've got ideas for film, you'll be okay. If you've got ideas for painting, you're okay, too. There was a teacher there, Frank Daniel, who had been dean of the Czechoslovakian Film School. When the Russians went into Czechoslovakia he got out, thanks to George Stevens Jr., the head of the American Film Institute, who sent him a plane ticket and made him dean of the center in LA. Daniel was a great teacher and a really good person. I loved his class, Film Analysis. One of the students would focus on editing, another on sound, another on music, another on writing, and another on whatever. We'd watch a film together and talk about it from those different points of view. That makes you start thinking about the different elements.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Despite working in many different areas — film, painting, sculpture, and music — and using many different vocabularies, certain themes run through all of your work. You could call it the dark side of the American Dream, represented by eerie, suburban landscape settings. In your paintings maybe it's manifested as traditional, gabled houses. There's the theme of the longing that seems to preoccupy many of the characters in your films. Do the figures in your paintings that have very long arms also express longing, striving, and reaching?*
DAVID LYNCH — Yeah. It's nice that you say that. There's a watercolor called *Man Reaching,* and some lithographs, *Reaching out for Nothing, Reaching Out,* and *Reaching.* I don't really think about things so precisely, but ideas come. Ideas are interesting to think about in terms of what makes them come along, and, in my case, in terms of what makes me fall in love with certain ideas and not others. **Also, there is something about wanting to make a dream place. In a good dream place there are forces at work that go against it, so it's tough. It's not a walk in the park.**

ALEX ISRAEL — *There's another recurring theme in your work: a fervent spirituality. In your films this seems to be achieved primarily through music and lighting. In the paintings I see it in terms of framing and presentation. The scale of a painting can do what the lighting and the music do in a film. I'm wondering*

if you think about that when you're working on the paintings — their size, their frames, and the way they oftentimes appear as altarpieces.
DAVID LYNCH — I call them jewel boxes. I saw a show of Francis Bacon's work at the Marlborough Gallery in New York…

ALEX ISRAEL — *And fell in love with the gold frames and the glazing?*
DAVID LYNCH — Yeah.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Damien Hirst was really influenced by Francis Bacon's framing. It's been said that Hirst's use of glass cases comes from Bacon.*
DAVID LYNCH — I did a bunch of glass cases for the Galeries Lafayette in Paris. They were four- or five-feet deep. At one point I started to build the paintings more dimensionally, so some went back and some came forward. But, you know, you need a place for them to live.

ALEX ISRAEL — *A jewel box is small and intimate, but you make relatively large-scale works.*
DAVID LYNCH — It's a jewel box that you look into through a glass front.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Like a diorama at a natural history museum.*
DAVID LYNCH — Yeah. There's something so magical about them — whole worlds are contained in them.

ALEX ISRAEL — *There's something stage-like about a diorama.*
DAVID LYNCH — I don't really work on stage things, but I've always loved them.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Have you ever done stage work?*
DAVID LYNCH — Yes, with *Industrial Symphony No. 1*, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. That was a long time ago, in 1989, after I made *Wild At Heart*. I did it with Angelo Badalamenti and Julee Cruise.

ALEX ISRAEL — *There are a lot of light bulbs in the exhibition of your artwork that's on now. In the center of the show is a stage full of lamps. Are these paintings and sculptures similar to films, in the way they use images and light?*
DAVID LYNCH — In a weird way, they're like very, very short stories. I like a story in a painting.

ALEX ISRAEL — *The theme of decay is another constant that runs through your work. In your films it often takes on a very literal representation, such as the ear in* Blue Velvet. *In your paintings I think this theme is implied in the way the paint looks like food, or flesh, or other things that rot.*
DAVID LYNCH — **That's the organic phenomenon.**

Everything new gets old and starts changing, and oftentimes it's more beautiful and interesting once nature starts working on it.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Does a rotting corpse disgust you?*
DAVID LYNCH — No.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Did you grow up around dead animals?*
DAVID LYNCH — [Laughs] **I grew up in the woods, where there are dead things and living things. Life goes on, which is so fantastic.**

ALEX ISRAEL — *What about fear?*
DAVID LYNCH — There's a lot of fear in the woods at night, when the sun goes down, especially when you're in a dark part of the woods.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Another theme is madness, isn't it?*
DAVID LYNCH — Madness is really a variation on a theme. There's so-called normal behavior and then there's behavior that veers off from it — that's what really interests me.

ALEX ISRAEL — *In your work madness sometimes takes the form of adults exhibiting childlike behavior. For example, Diane Ladd in* Wild at Heart, *putting on her lipstick. She starts with her lips and then covers her entire face with it. That's something a kid would do. In your paintings the exploration of madness seems most prevalent in the way you use text, which looks like it was written by an adult but in a childlike way.*
DAVID LYNCH — The childlike thing in the painting has to do with a kind of bad drawing, which to me is more beautiful than precise drawing. There's something that happens when a text starts breaking apart or becoming childlike. The world expands and starts to feel like a dream. Simple childlike things can become absurdities, and can even conjure up bigger things, which are more precise than well-formed paragraphs. Something organic occurs in childlike things. There's so much freedom.

ALEX ISRAEL — *And madness?*
DAVID LYNCH — No, it's not really madness. It depends which way you go with it. It's like the Vedic line, "The world is as you are." Each viewer takes a different trip. If you are inclined to go one way, you'll go that way.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Your art, films, and music evoke darkness and fearfulness, but humor frequently runs alongside this darkness and fearfulness. I'm curious to know where you stand in terms of this relationship — that of the real emotional, expressive, fear-inducing impulse with the sense of humor, irony, and camp.*
DAVID LYNCH — It's a fine line. It comes with the ideas. I don't try to affect anyone. I get ideas and I fall in love with them. I understand that there's humor, fearful elements, beautiful things, and magical moments. Ideas come, but things have to be done in a certain way. The translating of the ideas is my job.

ALEX ISRAEL — *When you say that you don't try to affect anyone, do you mean that you translate ideas into experiences for yourself first, and that maybe others will be able to share these experiences with you?*
DAVID LYNCH — Yes. If I'm true to an idea, if I do the best I can to make it clear, and if it's thrilling to me, chances are it will be thrilling to at least a few other people. But ideas are strange. There are ideas that thrill a lot of people, and there are ideas that thrill only a few.

ALEX ISRAEL — *You recently performed live with Duran Duran.*
DAVID LYNCH — Yeah, but that was Duran Duran on a stage. American Express does these things called Unstaged — you know, So-and-So Unstaged. They did Arcade Fire Unstaged. They ask a director to film it. Terry Gilliam did Arcade Fire. When they asked me to do Duran Duran, I started thinking that everybody knows these concerts look similar, that they're all kind of the same. I thought, "What can I do?" Listening to the music I'd get ideas for images. Then I'd build, find, and shoot those images, which were then double-exposed over the concert to varying degrees — sometimes it was 100% of the image with no concert, and sometimes it was very little image and more concert. We always had the two swimming together. I thought it was very beautiful and hopeful.

ALEX ISRAEL — *I love your song, "Good Day Today." It's very eerie and desperate in tone — especially in the way that the lyric is repeated over and over again. It's an unexpected coming together of moods, it's a complicated idea, and, at the same time, it's a really fun dance track.*
DAVID LYNCH — It's a bunch of things. I just started hearing the tune, and the lyrics "I want to have a good day today" just came. Then I started thinking, well, everybody wants a good day, but not everybody is going to get a good day. So it's a yearning for something. Then other lyrics started coming and the thing got formed. My most recent ideas have come from the world of music.

ALEX ISRAEL — *There's another theme in your work, which is that whatever medium you're working*

Film still from *Eraserhead,* 1977, copyright David Lynch

Left: Love Light, 2009-2010, cold-rolled steel, wood, 71 x 13 x 17 inches
Right: Yellow Green Violet Lamp, 2011, cold-rolled steel, plaster, tint, resin, 60 x 12 x 24 inches

in, the work you create tends to refer back to that medium. Your films are, in many ways, about filmmaking. "Good Day Today" is pretty much about using the structure of a pop song for a dance track. Your paintings are about painting, in the way they exaggerate painting by building up surfaces, foregrounds, and the paint-on-canvas relationship, which lies at the root of that form. It's hard for me to imagine an artist like yourself — a master of his craft — rejecting the impulse to use this facility in order to manipulate an audience.

DAVID LYNCH — No. Never. *I'm* the viewer, but I'm also trying to get the ideas right. I'm manipulating the action until it feels correct. There's something nice about sharing things. An idea has a particular sense, whether it's a fearful idea, a happy idea, or a sad idea. It has many different qualities, which are specific for specific things. There's a man and a woman in a room and they look a certain way, they talk a certain way. That comes with the idea. That's the idea. Otherwise, how would you know what to do? These ideas put themselves together. I say the same thing over and over again just to get it to feel correct! But if no one else saw it… Take the idea for my painting, *Boy Lights Fire:* I need to build a matchbook. And I like red rubber gloves. I like the long arms. I like certain proportions. I like cardboard. *Boy Lights Fire* brings all of this stuff together in an instant. So, basically, it's done. But, actually, it's far from done, because when you get into the specifics of building each element you say to yourself, "That's too big." Or, "That's too small." Or, "I gotta do that again." Or, "I gotta fix this." That's what happens with these materials. It's a fantastic process. Driven by the idea. Intuitively unfolding the idea.

ALEX ISRAEL — *When you're working on a film, do you take part in all the different aspects, like the props and surfaces, the sound, and the scoring?*

DAVID LYNCH — Just like in the paintings.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Is painting a solitary process?*

DAVID LYNCH — Pretty much.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Do you think of your films as being handmade artworks?*

DAVID LYNCH — Yes, but I have many helpers.

ALEX ISRAEL — *You have a history of using the same actors in different projects. These recurring faces take on the characteristics of a recurring material, which adds a kind of handmade, very personal quality to the films.*

DAVID LYNCH — You want the right person for every part. If you've worked with someone before, and they're right for the part, it's a good double-whammy, because you've developed a friendship, and a shorthand kind of communication, so it's going to be easier. Going down the road with this person is not an unknown. Of course, if an unknown person is right for the part, you go with them.

ALEX ISRAEL — *Is there a connection between the way you cast a film and the way you choose materials for one of your jewel boxes?*

DAVID LYNCH — In a way. What I normally do is I look at faces. The casting director Johanna Ray shows me a lot of them. Maybe I'll take the top ten. I used to talk to all ten, but sometimes that takes too long, so now they're

Fire on a Man, 2008-2009, watercolor on paper, 10 1/4 x 14 inches

put on videotape and I watch them. When I see someone talking I can tell. Sometimes someone will just squeak through; sometimes someone will slam it. A lot of times someone won't be right for the part they came in for but I'll see them for another part. Something like that always happens.

ALEX ISRAEL — *What does the transition from film to digital mean to you in terms of the material?*
DAVID LYNCH — Normally, I'd be the person least likely to switch because I want the organic thing, but I started experimenting with the Sony PD150 and I was amazed at the immediacy of it. It's just incredible!

ALEX ISRAEL — *Did switching to video enhance your ability to make things organically?*
DAVID LYNCH — **Yes. You can hold the camera, you can move it, you can make it go over here, you can make it go slow, and it doesn't matter if the quality is bad.** The medium pulls forth ideas that marry to it. If it's watercolor, ideas will come that fit with what you like about watercolor. If it's music, ideas will come through that you can marry to a particular drum or guitar sound. It just happens. Good video imagery has a life of its own.

END

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David Lynch
Biography

1946 Born in Missoula, Montana.
Lives and works in Los Angeles, California.

Education:

1964-65 Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA
Boston Museum School, Boston, Massachusetts
1963-64 Corcoran School of Art, Washington, D.C.

Selected Exhibitions:

2019 "David Lynch: Squeaky Flies in the Mud," Sperone Westwater, New York, 1 November – 21 December
"David Lynch: My Head Is Disconnected," curated by Sarah Perks and Omar Kholeif, HOME, Manchester, 6 July – 29 September
"Life to come," Group Exhibition, curated by Asad Raza, Metro Pictures, New York, 17 January – 16 February
2018-19 "David Lynch: Someone is in my House," Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, 30 November 2018 – 28 April 2019 (catalogue)
2018 "David Lynch: I was a teenage insect," Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles, 8 September – 3 November
2017-18 "David Lynch. Silence and Dynamism," Centre of Contemporary Art, Toruń, Poland, 12 November 2017 – 18 February 2018
"Les Visitants. Una mirada de Guillermo Kuitca a la colección de la Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain," Group Exhibition, CCK, Buenos Aires, 27 October 2017 – 24 June 2018 (catalogue)
"Smiling Jack," Galerie Karl Pfefferle, Munich, 7 September – 4 November
2015 "David Lynch: Between Two Worlds," Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 14 March – 8 June (catalogue)
2014-15 "David Lynch: The Unified Field," Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 13 September 2014 – 11 January 2015 (catalogue)
2014 "David Lynch," Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo, 25 June – 14 July
"Frank Gehry: Solaris Chronicles, Part 2," Group Exhibition, curated by Liam Gillick, Hans Ulrich-Obrist and Philippe Parreno, Atelier de la Mecanique, LUMA Arles Campus, Arles, 5 April – 26 October
"David Lynch: The Factory Photographs," curated by Petra Giloy-Hirtz, The Photographers' Gallery, London, 17 January – 30 March; Fondazione MAST, Bologna, 17 September – 31 December (catalogue)
"David Lynch: Small Stories," La Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, 15 January – 16 March
2013-15 "David Lynch: Naming," curated by Brett Littman, Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles, 23 November 2013 – 4 January 2014; Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Middlesbrough, England, 12 December 2014 – 26 March 2015 (catalogue)
2013-14 "David Lynch: New Works," Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles, 23 November 2013 – 4 January 2014
2013 "Hypnotherapy," Group Exhibition, Kent Fine Art, New York, 4 May – 29 June
"David Lynch: Circle of Dreams," Centre de la Gravure et de l'Image imprimée de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, La Louvière, Belgium, 23 February – 19 May

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2012	"David Lynch: Chaos Theory of Violence and Silence," La Foret Museum, Tokyo, 10 November – 2 December (catalogue)
	"David Lynch: It Happened at Night," Galerie Karl Pfefferle, Munich, 26 October – 22 December
	"Lost Paradise – Blumenbilder in der Fotografie der Gegenwart," Group Exhibition, Mönchehaus Museum, Goslar, Germany, 11 August – 23 September
	"David Lynch," Tilton Gallery, New York, 6 March – 14 April
	"David Lynch: Man Waking From Dream," Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, France, 28 January – 20 May (catalogue)
2011	"David Lynch: New Painting and Sculpture," Griffin and Corcoran, Santa Monica, CA, 19 March – 28 May
	"Works on Paper," Item Gallery, Paris
2010-11	"David Lynch," Mönchenhaus Museum, Goslar, Germany, 9 October 2010 – 30 January 2011
2010	"David Lynch: Photographs," Galerie Karl Pfefferle, Munich, 29 October – 18 December
	"Darkened Room," Six, Osaka, 7 August – 9 October; Six, Seoul, opened 21 October
	"David Lynch: I hold you tight," Musée Jenisch, Vevey, Switzerland, 4 – 26 September
	"Marilyn Manson and David Lynch: Genealogies of Pain," Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, 30 June – 25 July (catalogue)
	"Crime and Punishment," Group Exhibition, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, 16 March – 27 June
	"New Prints and Drawings," Item Gallery, Paris
	"Daivd Lynch: Lithos 2007-2009," Musée du dessin et de l'estampe originale, Gravelines, France (catalogue)
2009-10	"David Lynch," XVIII Festival Ars Cameralis 2009, Ars Cameralis Culture Institution, Katowice, Poland, 25 November 2009 – 5 January 2010
	"David Lynch: Dark Splendor," Max Ernst Museum, Brühl, Germany, 22 November 2009 – 18 April 2010 (catalogue)
2009	"I See Myself: Machines, Abstraction and Women," Galerie des Galeries, Paris, 8 September – 3 October
	"Dark Night of the Soul," Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, 30 May – 11 July (catalogue)
	"David Lynch and William Eggleston: Photographs," Galerie Karl Pfefferle, Munich, 20 March – 9 May
	"David Lynch: New Paintings," Griffin and Corcoran, Santa Monica, CA, closed 12 December
	"Hand of Dreams," Item Gallery, Paris
2008	"David Lynch: New Photographs," Epson Kunstbetrieb, Düsseldorf, 27 September – 23 November
2007-11	"David Lynch: The Air is on Fire," Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, 24 February – 27 May 2007; La Triennale di Milano, Milan, 9 October 2007 – 13 January 2008; Cultural Foundation Ekaterina, Moscow, 11 April – 12 July 2009; GL Strand, Copenhagen, 26 September 2010 – 16 January 2011 (catalogue)
2007-09	"Fetish," Galerie du Passage, Paris, 3 October – 3 November 2007; Garage Center for Contemporary Culture, Moscow, 9 April – 10 May 2009 (catalogue)
2007	"Prints in Paris," Item Gallery, Paris, France
	"David Lynch: Inland Empire," Galerie du Jour agnès b., Paris
2003-04	"David Lynch: Painting and Photography," Atlas Sztuki, Lodz, Poland, 30 November 2003 – 25 January 2004 (catalogue)
2001	Centre de Cultura de Barcelona, Barcelona
	Printemps de Septembre, Toulouse, France, 28 September – 14 October
1997	Otsu Parco Gallery, Osaka
	Galerie Piltzer, Paris
1996	Painting Pavilion, Open Air Museum, Hakone, Japan
	Park Tower Hall, Tokyo
	Namba City Hall, Osaka
	Artium, Fukuoka, Japan

1995 Kohn/Turner Gallery, Los Angeles
1993 James Corcoran Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
1992 "David Lynch," Sala Parpallo and Palau dels Scala, Valencia, Spain, May – June (catalogue)
1991 "David Lynch: Paintings and Drawings," Touko Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, 12 – 27 January (catalogue)
1990 N. No. N. Gallery, Dallas
1989 James Corcoran Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
"David Lynch," Leo Castelli Gallery, New York, 4 – 25 February
1987 James Corcoran Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
Rodger LaPelle Galleries, Philadelphia
1967 Vanderlip Gallery, Philadelphia

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Pagel, David. "Review: David Lynch's paintings reveal insecurities of adolescence and maligned misfits." *www.latimes.com (Los Angeles Times)*, 26 October 2018.
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2015 Lim, Dennis. "On Site: David Lynch in Philadelphia." *www.artforum.com (Artforum)*, January 2015.
David Lynch: Between Two Worlds. Exhibition catalogue. Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, 2015.
2014 Bors, Chris. "Critics' Picks: David Lynch." *www.artforum.com (Artforum)*, 29 December 2014.
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Hug, Cathérine, and David Galloway. *Marilyn Manson & David Lynch: Genealogies of Pain*. Exhibition catalogue. Viennal: Kunsthalle Vienna, 2010.
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Dark Night of the Soul. Exhibition catalogue. New York: powerHouse Books, 2009.
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2007 O'Hagan, Sean. "'You don't walk away until it feels correct.'" *www.theguardian.com (The Observer)*, 24 February 2007.
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Fondation Vuitton, Paris
Greenville County Museum of Art, Greenville, SC
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia
Würth Collection, Germany